

MY ADVENTURES WITH THE I.N.A.



K. R. PALTA, M.A.
Personal Intelligence Officer
to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

FOREWORD BY
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Dedicated To

MY FATHER

*At whose feet I early saw the glory of
Our National Heritage*

Foreword

“ Those whom Fate destroys, blinds them first.” The representatives of British Imperialism in India, blinded by their traditional policy of ruthless suppression and in a spirit of revenge against those members of the Indian Army who, having organized themselves into the I.N.A., fought for the freedom of their country, failed to read the signs of Time when they staged the famous I.N.A. Trials.

Thanks to them the spirit of the I.N.A. spread like wild fire throughout the entire length and breadth of the country. The story of the patriotic fight of the I.N.A. reached the remotest corner and greatly stirred and awakened the masses and today I.N.A. has become a watchword all over India.

What the I.N.A. failed to accomplish itself, the narrow and vindictive policy of the British accomplished it for the I.N.A. and thus its material defeat turned out to be the greatest spiritual victory for the country. For this service we are very grateful to the British.

The I.N.A. has given new hope and new life to the country. It has set a new precedent for the long exploited armed forces and its true value will only be assessed in the coming struggle (which will be the final one). In that struggle, I am absolutely sure, that our brothers in the present armed forces will be in the fore-front of the battle and will give the finishing touch to the task which we of the I.N.A. commenced in December, 1941, thousands of miles away from India.

The true story of the formation of the I.N.A. is not yet known to the public but it is coming out in bits now and then. As chance would have it, I was placed in such circumstances that an idea flashed across my mind to contribute my humble share in the fight for freedom. I adopted a method for which I had been trained for fifteen years and the I.N.A. came into being. It was no easy task but the ready support and willing co-operation which I received from my comrades of the Indian army and my civilian brothers, made my work much easier than I had expected. Founded on Unity, Faith and Sacrifice the movement went on gathering strength till it was not only in a position to fight the British but was capable of challenging any one else who dared to come in its way. When the Japanese threatened to dishonour our motherland we challenged them and although we lost several thousand young

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men in that test, we are proud that we kept the banner of the honour of our beloved land flying high.

! The story of the formation of the I.N.A. in the East was however suppressed by the British in India in all possible ways, yet the regular broadcasts from Singapore, Saigon and Bangkok did reach thousands of listeners in India. Although the press and radio were under strict British control yet a strong whispering campaign continued spreading the news in India.

Mr. Krishan Raj Palta was in India at that time. He too heard about the I.N.A. Having heard it he could not remain a mere passive listener and his bold adventurous and patriotic spirit led him to see things for himself and to play his part too. There were thousands of young and brave men in India who wished that they were in the East but few could act and Mr. Palta was one of those very few who set out on a very hazardous and adventurous journey to cross the Indo-Burma border in 1942. It was not easy to attempt such a thing. Those who have never been to those regions cannot even imagine the difficulties that one has to encounter in order to cross the Indo-Burma border in those days. This bold young man crossed it and he has been very modest in describing his own experiences.

He has, in this little book, tried to bring to the Indian public something of the spirit which gave rise to the formation of the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army. These two organizations, although new in concept, were actually an extension of the Freedom movement which was already established for many years within the Indian frontiers. What the original Freedom movement lacked, however, was supplied by the I.N.A., the organization of the mind, disciplined thinking combined with a high sense of duty. For once, Indians were Indians and not disorganized communal bodies, swayed by a ruling Force which played one off against the other. It is this unifying aspect of the I.N.A. which Mr. Palta has so ably tried to convey to our countrymen.

The book is written in a very simple, straightforward and direct style and his story is nearer the truth than any other account that I have read so far with the exception of "Chalo Delhi" written by Messrs. S. A. Dass and K. B. Subhiah, a book published recently in Malaya. Mr. Palta's book will greatly benefit those who are anxious to learn. I wish the author success.

10th October, 1946.

MOHAN SINGH,
(I.N.A.)

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He is Immortal

CHAPTER I

Trek to Burma

In 1942 when Singapore-Bangkok Radio repeatedly announced the existence of an Indian National Army under the leadership of Rash Behari Bose, I and a friend of mine thought of crossing the Indo-Burma border and contacting the leaders of the I. N. A. and the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. In July, 1942, I finally decided to make preparations for my long journey and accordingly I left Delhi to see my parents at home. My companion, Mr. Tilak, and I proceeded towards Calcutta. Those were tense and exciting times. There was an upsurge of patriotic emotion everywhere and it was being suppressed with brute force. We reached Calcutta by about the third week of August. To Calcutta it was my first visit, but my friend had worked there previously for over one year as a journalist ; so it was not difficult for us to secure a place of abode. The " Quit India " movement was going in full swing and we could not keep ourselves out of it. We started organising a batch of young men to work for the cause. In carrying out our activities, we ran various risks. One of the presses managed by us was raided and many of our active workers were arrested. In Calcutta, with the exception of Communists, the whole of the civilian public stood solidly behind the revolutionary patriots and was willing

to give shelter and food and financial help to the revolutionaries. We managed to collect useful information about the situation prevailing on the northern and southern borders of the Eastern Front in the Manipur-Chittagong area. We worked in Calcutta for about three weeks, during which period we had not a few encounters with the police and the C.I D., whom we usually managed to dodge successfully.

A revolutionary has to go through real hell, and so had most of us to pass sleepless, exacting days and nights, with dreams of rooting out the British Empire. Imagine a few young men holding secret meetings and stealthily talking about changing a vast Empire in a few weeks' time—the Empire which had set her feet so deep on Indian soil. The Empire which had established itself for two hundred years was to be overthrown, mutilated, rooted out in a few months—if possible in few weeks. It was a thrilling idea! But with no spade work having been done in India earlier on revolutionary lines, it seemed a wild goose chase and not a practical and sane revolutionary step. It was like taking a leap in the dark.

But we had to enter the movement in 1942, not because we were convinced of our success or had prepared for a successful revolution, but because the British had challenged the very existence of our nationhood; they had challenged Indian youth. They wanted to rule us by the force of their military and police and through mass oppression. Could self-respecting Indians, and especially young Indians, sit idle, watching their elders play their role in this great fight? Could they sit dumb spectators of a show, while the Government machine staged so huge an insult to the self-respect of a nation,

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and thus, by abstaining from action, become indirectly the agents of their own defeat? The intellectual middle class youth, the young intelligentsia of India, the inexperienced raw youth of the country, was forced to take up this gigantic task which called for the ability, the acumen and the revolutionary spirit of a Lenin, of a Stalin or a Trotsky. But it had to be shouldered by the youth as the Congress leaders were already behind prison bars "somewhere in India." When nobody expected such a rash step from the Government as to ban a non-violent organisation like the Congress, the Congress was banned. Its offices were locked up and sealed and the property of many of its workers, sympathisers and leaders was confiscated and auctioned by the Government. The energy of the masses spurted out with a force unknown in India's past history, except in 1857.

Knowing that the 1942 Rebellion would end in defeat and anarchy, we joined the movement to play our part. We could not close our ears to the shrieks of our bleeding motherland who called to all her children for help and who was being ruthlessly trodden beneath the British Imperialist heel. Thousands of us, young and old, rich and poor, men and women, listened to the heart-rending cries of the mother, and jumped into the fire to rescue her from slavery. We threw in our lot against the powerful might of the British Empire, well settled in India. We were to combat the well organised C. I. D., the administration, the police, the British and the Indian military forces and all that Imperialism employs to work her purposes. Though we did not succeed in freeing India in 1942, we did fight Imperialist Britain. And the British have admitted by their ruth-

less oppression of our people, that we fought them well. The stories of those days now seem to us as if they were taken from the pages of fiction—exciting, adventurous; dare-devilish.

While in Calcutta we learnt that in Burma there were many small streams and rivulets to cross which without a boat would be a hazardous task. I enquired from my friend whether he could swim and I was disappointed to know that he could not. Still we left for Chittagong. We dodged the police and the C.I.D. several times. On the way from Calcutta to Chittagong our companions were either the army personnel going to the front or a few civilians belonging to East Bengal. Up to Chittagong, we did not meet with any difficulty whatsoever. On reaching Chittagong, while having tea in a shop, we met a Hindu shopkeeper who unconsciously gave us all the information that we needed. As he had his own shop in Buthidaung, we could rely upon the data that he gave us. On enquiry from us as to who we were, we told him that we were journalists and had been sent by our papers to report front line news. He fully believed us and gave us all the information he had regarding the front. For the first time we learnt that this route was connected by land with Burma and, if luck favoured us, it would not be very difficult for us to cross the frontier. The people of Chittagong were in a panic. The aerodrome was bombed by the Japs twice that month and the civilian population was so afraid that out of a total number of 50,000 people hardly 5,000 were left in the town. Any planes in the sky were taken for enemy planes.

After two days' stay in the town, we caught the boat for Cox's Bazar and on our way we discovered a

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C.I.D. man in the boat watching us very carefully. He came to us with some excuse and tried to get friendly with us. After a short while, he questioned us as to where we were going and who we were. We successfully used our "relief workers" stunt and told him that we were going to Rai Bahadur B. B. Rakshak's place, which name we had learnt at Chittagong. To avoid suspicion we thought it best to stay either with some official or at some pro-British Indian's residence. On leaving the launch at Cox's Bazar, the C.I.D. man escorted us to the Rai Bahadur's house and, on finding our host cordially welcoming us, he went away.

The Rai Bahadur was highly pleased to see two Punjabi young men doing relief work for evacuees coming from Burma and passing through his district. Having learnt all about us, the Rai Bahadur like any other old man started talking to us about his own family and specially about his son, who was then studying in England. He enthusiastically showed his son's letters to us and we admired his son's ability and wished him a happy journey back home after the war. The difficult task of going further was facilitated by the valuable information that we got from the Rai Bahadur. We learnt from him all about that area and its people. There were men belonging to all shades of opinion who inhabited this area. We found menfolk lazily chatting when womenfolk were chopping wood and working as fisherwomen and field hands. After having tea at the Rai Bahadur's place my friend and I went for a walk to the sea beach where we saw no defences, except a few sentries patrolling the area. In the night we learnt from the Rai Bahadur that a Khan Sahib, an executive officer, was busy touring the area. This information

proved to us very valuable in our later journey. The Rai Bahadur advised us to get back to Calcutta as he said there were no evacuees left in his area and all who had come from Burma had gone to their respective homes in India long ago. We told him that as we had come so far it would be worth while going a little further.

Next morning, accompanied by his servant and a coolie, we moved on taking the sea-side route. On the way we passed a British post where the sentry did not pay any attention to us. We moved on and towards the evening, travelling about 10 miles from Cox's Bazar, we reached a village. We sent the Rai Bahadur's servant back, sending a message through him that we would be back ourselves in another day's time. In this village we stayed with a shop-keeper for whom we had brought a letter of introduction from the Rai Bahadur. Here we actually came across a few Oriya refugees, who on hearing that we were connected with the Relief Society came to us for help, but we refused them any ready help, saying that we were there not to give any money, but only to send information about the evacuees to our headquarters. Staying for a night in that village, we moved further with the help of a guide picked up from the village and thus walking reached another small village, which was approximately 25 miles from Cox's Bazar. Hiring a boat here and travelling by it the whole night, we reached Maungdow, where Indian sentries challenged us. We immediately replied that we were Khan Sahib's men and had come to see him on urgent business. Luckily for us the Khan Sahib had left for Buthidaung that morning. So the sentries arranged for us a coolie and we left for Buthidaung

the same moment. A few miles off Maungdow towards Buthidaung I made acquaintance with a Muslim resident of the area and promised him a good prize in return if he would help us to by-pass the Buthidaung town through some secret route. He took us through a *kutcha* road leading towards a canal, where we hired a boat and thus avoiding Buthidaung went further.

Hardly had we covered another mile when we heard the crack of rifle fire just close to us. On enquiry from the boatman we learnt that trouble had arisen because the headman of one of those villages had completely thrown off the authority of the British and the Japs and had become a self styled ruler of the area. He had a store of about 500 rifles and enough rounds of ammunition and in these two months had trained all able-bodied men of his village in the use of the rifle. Now he was claiming allegiance from the neighbouring villages and, if any of the villagers refused to accept his authority, he would send his riflemen to their village, who would loot it and bring back whatever they could. Firing was then in progress. We all took cover and with bated breath waited for the firing to stop for a while so that we might be able to cross that river. But that did not happen. Now there was no alternative except to get back to Buthidaung and wait till the firing stopped. Unfortunately, we found ourselves in the very place we wanted to avoid. We found ourselves in a terrible fix on account of the presence of the Khan Sahib in the area. We were afraid ~~not~~ only of the Khan Sahib, but of the Buthidaung Peace Committee, which was reputed to be a staunch ally of the British. Mustering all the courage at our command, through the mediation of our boatman we

arranged for a local guide who promised to lead us to the Rauthidaung-Akyab short track. Led by the guide, we moved further till we came at a point where our guide, showing us the way to Rauthidaung, asked for his dismissal and his wages. We had no other alternative but to allow him to go. Before departing, he requested us not to go far off, as that was the last of the Muslim villages and next to that we would find either the Burmese or the Japs.

Now we were left entirely to ourselves in the Arakan hills. We had already sunk our suitcases in the river and thrown away our bedding in the jungle. So we were left with nothing to carry. It was a great relief to walk. Our shoes had become completely useless so we got rid of them and started barefoot. Rauthidaung was said to be only about 17 miles away. We found on the way burnt houses and completely destroyed pagodas (Buddhist temples) which were uninhabited by any human beings. In this sector regular guerilla warfare had occurred between the Arakanese Buddhists and the Muslims. The Buddhists had retreated towards Rauthidaung after playing havoc with the property of the Arakanese Muslims. Hungry and tired, we walked on. At last we sighted a pagoda. This gave us a feeling of relief as we thought this temple to be the last post in our journey. We congratulated each other at our success in reaching our destination and started moving towards the pagoda, making clever plans to contact the Buddhist priest. Nearing the padoga, we got suspicious as we found no trace of man or animal there. Finding the stairs, we reached the top of the pagoda and started a search for some human soul. But to our dismay we could not find anybody. Momentary

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sadness over came us, but it did not last. Again we decided to move on.

We came to an Arakanese village, whose inhabitants, about 40 in number, armed with daggers, blocked our way. I immediately shouted that both of us were Muslims from the Punjab and were the Special Intelligence Officers of the British and had volunteered our services to reconnoitre the area and added that we were fully aware of the trouble, to which our Muslim brothers of the Arakan area had been put by the Burmese and the Japs. One of them shouted with a suspicious look. "Do you say on oath that you are not Jap spies?" We satisfied him with an oath and all were pleased to see us taking such pains for our co-religionists. They offered us rice to eat, which we gladly accepted. We had gone without food for two days. Crossing the river, we started walking by the side of the telegraph poles. Thus walking, we found a canal in our way. After making a useless search for the bridge, we tried to cross it by swimming. My comrade knew very little about swimming, but with my support he succeeded in reaching the other bank. After a few minutes' rest, we again moved on. Now we were sure in our own minds that we had left Arakanese villages behind us and thus were in no danger from the British. Tired though we were we walked on. Walking is not a difficult job if one's stomach is full, but we were hungry and tired. I felt very thirsty and we started moving towards the river in search of water. Just as we were nearing it, we sighted a few peasants who looked like Arakanese. The same trick of Islam worked here too and we were offered rice, salt and water by our new hosts. They were a poor lot, so they felt quite satisfied when we gave

them an Indian rupee. We were now left with only a few Indian annas. Our torch had become useless as the cells had got jammed by regular soaking in water ; so we threw away the torch. These Arakanese peasants told us to be careful in our movements as at intervals a Japanese launch plied in that area. Hearing that, we heaved a sigh of relief. So this village was within the sphere of the Japanese. In another day no man's land would be crossed and we would contact the Japanese and the leaders of the Indian Independence Movement. We reached the village towards the evening, crossing the river by boat. Whatever little money was left with us we gave to the boatman.

The news spread in the whole village that we were British spies. Now the story we had told to our hosts on the other side of the river spread from mouth to mouth. We had never suspected all this would happen. The headman of the village because of his being nearer to the Japanese zone of influence naturally had to keep himself in their good books and at the same time not displease the British as his village (Kuzing) was then visited by both Japanese and British patrolling parties. As we landed in the village I enquired from the villagers if my brother Rashid had come from Akyab by the launch that arrived in Kuzing that evening. Nobody seemed to know anything about the launch. It was a puzzling situation. We did not lose heart and continued secret enquiries about the launch. Another person, a fisherman, disclosed to us that a launch had come that day and was in the creek. This completely satisfied us and our conviction that the village was pro-Japanese was more or less confirmed.

In the meantime, the headman and the elders of

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the village called a secret meeting to decide our fate. They were all afraid that we were British spies and in case we were British spies we had come there to know the position of the Japanese launch. After learning about the launch, we started towards the creek. But fearing that someone from the launch might shoot us at first sight we turned back. As we came to the bazaar, the magistrate and his men called us up. We were taken by his men to the court room. It was a small dirty room where a few handcuffs were lying in a corner. The headman took me aside and enquired about our real identity. By this time my comrade and I were sure of the whole position, so I disclosed the real object of our being there. Even then I told him that I was a Muslim, named Majid, though my friend was a Hindu and we promised him a good reward if he would help us in reaching the Japanese side. He fully believed our story and dispersing the elders' meeting invited us to his house. We sat in the headman's house waiting for dinner. In the meantime, the launch officer, who was an Arakanese Indian, came to make enquiries about us. Taking us to be British spies, he changed his original programme of leaving at night, and as we were talking to our host, we heard the launch whistle. Our host went out to inquire and found the boat steaming off to Akyab. He immediately called us to the river bank and anxiously assured us that he would see that we got the launch. Travelling by a sampan (a small boat), we went after the launch paddling fast. The launch was speeding out of the creek, not at a great distance from us. Our host shouted to the launch commander, yelling at the top of his voice. But nobody cared to reply because, as we learnt afterward from certain men in the

village, the commander of the launch was convinced of our being British spies and he did not want to take any risk. It was raining very heavily. Our voices could not reach the launch, so we all came back thoroughly disappointed. Our host turned out to be a brave man and he promised to give us refuge in his house till the launch came a second time. But he warned us not to go out of the house for the people there were likely to get suspicious.

During my stay at the headman's house I was very particular about saying "Ya Allah" or "Rabul-al-Min." Those were the Ramzan days and I just put up the excuse that I was unable to observe the holy fast because of the tedious journey I was undertaking. I assured my host that I would keep all the neglected Rozas as soon as I reached my destination. Even then I kept the fast on Friday, which my host highly appreciated. My feet, which had gone bad on account of non-stop walks, were cured as a result of the forced rest. Our only way of spending the time was sleeping and making plans for the future. After a few weeks' stay, we were getting quite restless and decided to push forward in another day or two in case the launch did not turn up. We started making plans of our route and tried to learn all that we could about the Burmese and the Japs. Like other Arakanese villages this village too was completely independent of British or Japanese rule.

One night when we were sleeping, our host came and woke us up saying that the launch had come and we should get ready to go. This time again no Japanese had come with the launch. The men, who came with the launch, were all Arakanese. We had no luggage to

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•pack up, so it was in a few minutes' time that we went to see the launch commander, who greeted us and agreed to take us to Akyab. It was about 11 o'clock at night, and the moon was shining dimly in the cloudy sky when we set foot on the launch. The launch steamed in half an hour's time. The villagers did not notice us as they were busy selling their goods to the passengers in the launch. We reached Akyab next morning. In half an hour's time we found ourselves in the Japanese office. The Indian commander of the launch introduced us as Indian patriots, who had come to contact the Japanese and the leaders of the Indian Independence League.

The first Japanese who met us was a Lt.-Colonel of the army. A few minutes later, a Hindi speaking Japanese priest came, who greeted us with *Bande Matram* and started talking to us in pure Hindi. We learnt from him that his name was Mariyama, popularly known as Mariyama Shonen (Reverend Mariyama), and he had travelled widely in India. He asked us about the health of our leaders and told us interesting stories about his travels in India. He was in Gandhiji's Ashram for a couple of months and was known there by the name of Anandji. In Akyab he was helping the Japanese army as an interpreter, a teacher of Hindi, a wireless operator and a religious head. He invited us both to put up at his own place. For the few days that we stayed in Akyab, except that British planes came over two or three times, nothing of importance happened. In Akyab we met our I.N.A. soldiers, who were high spirited and we told them all that they asked us about India. They were mostly interested in the Indian political situation.

Lt. Surat Singh of the I. N. A., one officer among them, told us a lot about Captain Mohan Singh, the then General Officer Commanding, the Jitra Front, and the Malayan campaign, etc., etc. He had seen the whole course of the war. Through him, we learnt that the soldiers of the British army were kept ignorant about the declaration of war by Japan on Britain and the United States. The planes which flew over the towns in Malaya were sighted by the soldiers, but were taken to be British or American planes. But when a few wounded men came to the base hospital, the terrible stories of fighting told by these men struck a chill in the hearts of the British and Indian soldiers, who were surprised to know that a war was on and bloody fighting was going on so close to them. Now the question was whether should they fight the barbarian Japs or should they surrender as prisoners of war to the ruthless cannibals, who were rumoured to be killing all those who fell into their hands and not sparing any to be kept as prisoners of war. The Indian army fully relied upon this British propaganda. The army at Jitra put up a stiff and heroic fight for full 72 hours when the Japs was pushed inside the Thai border, but the morale of the Indian Army commanders, who were mostly British, gave way, and a hopeless despair ruled them. On the fourth day of the enemy attack the defence of Jitra were broken by the Japs and an irregular and disorderly retreat started. Near Jitra, Captain Mohan Singh contacted Major Fujiwara, a Japanese Staff Officer, through Giani Pritam Singh and was assured by the major on behalf of the Japanese Government that the Japs would give all aid in the formation of the I.N.A. Captain Mohan Singh took up the task of organising the I.N.A. The retreat which started from Jitra ended

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ed only after the fall of Singapore and after the British crossed the Chindwin river in Burma in May, 1942. The commanders of the Indian Army, who themselves wanted to flee and save their lives, expected their soldiers to fight to the last man, the last bullet and the last drop of their blood, but this was not practical. The attack by the navy in Malaya from the sea and the fast movement of the Jap army in the Central and Eastern Sectors led the British army to retreat up to Kotah Bahru, where the Australians put up stiff resistance against the Japs. But they were defeated and the war entered Singapore. When the Japanese were chasing the retreating British army they completely ignored the Indian soldiers, who at times found themselves faced with the Japs when they were sitting cooking their meals, or peacefully walking on some jungle road in Malaya. When the Indians did not find the Japs being cruel to them, many of them began to feel that the British propaganda had been conducted to misguide them and prejudice them against their Asiatic brothers. The Japs' strategy and their equipment proved far superior to the British and at a minimum loss to themselves and with a much less number of men they captured the whole of East Asia with dramatic speed.

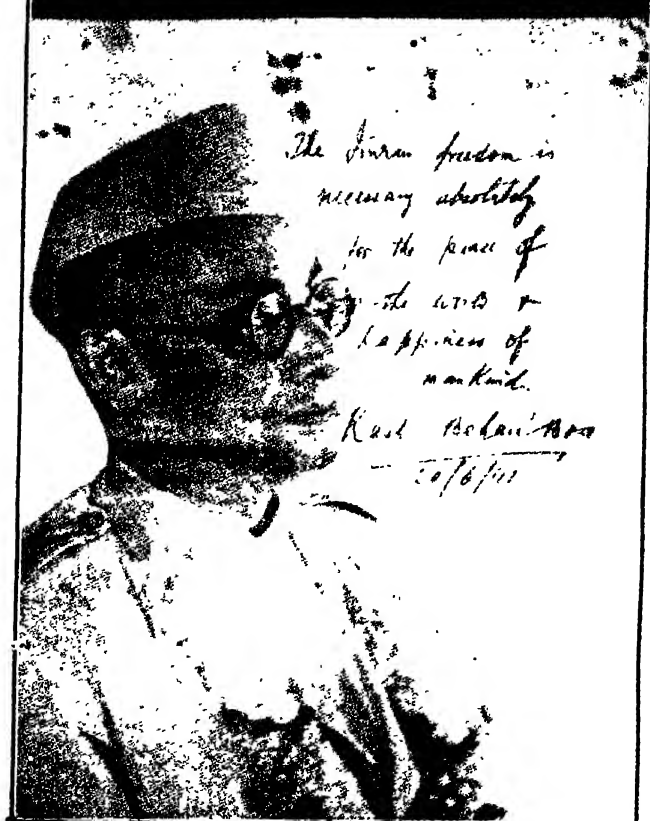
Thoroughly tired of the British Government's policy of discrimination, the Indians were naturally quite happy when they saw the British being well beaten by the Japs. The spirit of vendetta had begun to take hold of the Indian mind. The circumstances in which the stirring blow for India's freedom was to be struck on foreign soil were thus being created. Still there was very little action. The Indians, who had always been looking to the day when they could retaliate for the insults heaped

upon India, joined the Japs immediately.

The Indian National Army was not the creation of an individual or even a number of Indian leaders. Neither was the I. N. A. of Captain Mohan Singh his personal creation. It was the natural upsurge of history. The natural forces of history which had been gathering momentum for many years culminated in the making of the I. N. A.

It was by the natural reaction of an oppressed nation that the I. N. A. was created and its coming into being was symbolic of the impatience of all the oppressed nations of the world to throw off the imperialistic yoke, which, having outlived its utility, was beginning to act as a drag on human progress. The Indian soldiers, who were neither fighting for India, nor had any love for the British, were not reconciled to their slavery, and the hatred and fire which had raged in their hearts for years against the British broke forth at last. A change of heart had been imperceptibly, but certainly brought about. And now it was time for action. The British forces carried on their disorderly retreat up to the fall of Singapore. This invincible citadel was the last hope of the hopefuls, and then the British and the Indians fell prisoners to the Japs. The Indian Army, especially the section that had known nothing of Giani Pritam Singh's Free India Movement, still thought of the Japs as cannibals. The worried Indian Army prayed to God for the safety of their lives. Against all expectations, the Japanese Government passed on all prisoners of war to Captain Mohan Singh, who saw to their comfort.

IN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



RASH BEHARI BOSE

In Exile he flew for 35 years India's Freedom Flag

CHAPTER II

Rash Behari Bose

We were flown from Akyab to Rangoon. Others who travelled with us were three British and Australian pilots, two of whom had sustained serious injuries and most probably they were being moved to Rangoon jail. By lunch hour they were in Rangoon.

After finishing lunch at the Hikari Kikan Officers' Mess, we showed serious anxiety to the Japs for meeting Mr. Rash Behari Bose, who had come on a tour of Burma to settle Indian Independence League problems. We were taken to the Strand Hotel where he was putting up, but not finding him there, we were brought back to the Hikari Kikan Office where after about an hour's time we met him. He had already been informed about us by the Jap authorities. He welcomed us and we too greeting him with *Bande Matram* sat down. The meeting took place in the Hikari Kikan visitor's room, where one or two Japanese senior officers were present. We showed him our desire to have a private talk in a place where we could have all sorts of discussions. At this he replied "There is no harm in telling, all you want to tell."

Telling him all about ourselves and our political mission, we explained to him the political situation prevailing in the country since the "Quit India Movement," the revolutionary urge in the masses and the need of an

immediate attack by the I. N. A. on India. When we told him that National leaders had been arrested in Bombay and their whereabouts were unknown, he was moved. He said in a firm tone. "It is only a few months more when we will be in India and open the gates of all the jails and those responsible for all the oppression will be put there in the place of Indian patriots."

Mr. Rash Behari talked with animation about the old revolutionary parties. He especially enquired from us of the Anushlan and Yugantar parties. We did not ourselves belong to Bengal, but who is there even slightly acquainted with Indian politics who has not heard of the famous revolutionary deeds of these parties? The elderly revolutionary and the leader of the 1914 revolutionary parties, Mr. Rash Behari, went on putting our knowledge of the deeds of the old revolutionaries to an exacting test by surprising every moment with one awkward question or another. We talked of the famous Maniktola case, and as his memory glided through his past, he remembered the Bengal of Arbindhoo and Biran Ghosh's time. Mr. Rash Behari in these past 30 years had to pass through extremely difficult times and ordeals and had shown a dare-devil spirit in all the ordeals he went through. In Bengal, he was a revolutionary when most families in Bengal were busy making friends with the British. Rash Behari threw a bomb on Lord Hardinge when he was being led in a procession through Chandni Chouk, Delhi and escaped to Japan. There he laboured under very difficult conditions for a long time. Mr. Rash Behari had undergone a vast change in the views with the changes in time, and no longer saw India's salvation and independence in his once passionate belief in terroristic means. The exiled son of India

was pining to get back home and at least pay his homage to his motherland once before his death, this time not as a prisoner or as an underground revolutionary, but as one of the I. N. A. soldiers, a conqueror. The Revolutionary of 1914 was making the last bid of his life and taking this great chance to free his motherland, the motherland for which he had borne all ordeals and great tribulations.

As we are all aware, Japan was Britain's ally in the last war and as such could not give refuge to a rebel, who was responsible for throwing a bomb on a British Viceroy. But still a private citizen, Toyama San, a Japanese revolutionary who helped most of the revolutions in East Asia, gave refuge to Mr. Rash Behari and it was his beautiful and educated daughter that this young Indian revolutionary married. In the city of Tokyo all Indians who have lived in Rash Behari's time are fully aware of his services for India's freedom during these past 30 years. The Rash Behari of 1940-43 had the same young and warrior-like spirit which had marked his younger days, though he did not possess the same physical strength. A wrinkled old man, he had begun to lose some of his drive and energy.

While in Rangoon, we saw in the Hikari Kikan office a statement issued by Rash Behari, which is not so much an official statement as an anguished cry, an appeal and an invocation to his Indian brethren to rise before it may be too late. The opening announcement, 'The hour has struck', sounds like a gong of reprisal, and is a keynote to the genuineness of spirit that is revealed in every phrase of the statement and seems to make the atmosphere tremble with a sense of a frequent and fearful uncertainty.

Here is Rash Behari's Clasion call to India in June, 1942—

“ To my Indian friends,

“ The hour has struck. . .

“ During the two centuries of British rule, our sacred Motherland has been reduced to a state of utter poverty and helplessness. Before the advent of the British, for thousands of years our country had held up the beacon light of civilisation to the rest of the world.

“ We had contributed to the peace, progress and prosperity of humanity in a large measure. India was then known to the world as the land of plenty and perfection. India was then the seat of the world's learning and culture. The fame of Indian handicrafts echoed in all the corners of the globe.

“ But in two centuries of British rule, our flourrishing industries have been mercilessly destroyed, our popular educational systems have sedulously been wiped out, enlightened India has been reduced to the state of a home of illiterates. Our narional wealth has been drained out of the country. The Indian masses, that is, the teeming millions of Indian peasantry, have been reduced to a state of starvation and chronic indebtedness. India, once the treasure house of the East, has become the house of famine, disease and poverty.

“ The effects of British rule on our cultural and spiritual life have been most devastating. In Thailand, we are reminded at every step of the great influence of India's cultural and spiritual heritage on India's neighbours. Even in far-off Japan, Indian culture is still flourishing. But in India itself Britain has compelled the Indians to neglect and forget their national heritage.

“ British imperialist exploitation has robbed us of our most valuable treasures. We have been made to lose everything of which we were justly proud. Still India has not lost her soul. Centuries of oppression and exploitation have not been able to kill her soul. India has awakened and we are now conscious of our great loss. Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, Indian awakening in the last few decades has been phenomenal. Through his action and teachings, Mahatamaji has made us realise that the root cause of degeneration is our cultural and spiritual enslavement.

“ Mahatmaji has convinced us that, unless we Indians regain our confidence in our own culture and unless we learn to rely upon our own strength, we can never stand up for ourselves and defy our mighty oppressor. He has laboured for the last twenty years and India's millions have been trained along these lines.

“ I am in a position to assure my countrymen once again that Japan will not invade India, unless she is compelled to do so to destroy British bases of operation in India. One thing is certain. The British will have to leave India any way. They will destroy our homes and hearths, loot our property and inflict unthinkable sufferings on millions of our countrymen before they flee from the country. It is the solemn duty of every Indian to avert such a calamity, and this can be done if Indians themselves succeed in driving away the British from India immediately.

“ Events are moving fast and none of us knows what is in store for us tomorrow. Unless we act in time and wisely, we may have to repent all the rest of our lives.

“ India expects every true Indian to rise and

defend her honour at this hour of need."

From the way Mr. Rash Behari expressed his great confidence in the Japanese we concluded that Mr. Rash Behari viewed Indian Revolution and a free India only through the victory of the Japanese armed forces in India. It was evident from his talk that he was not very keen to increase the strength of the I. N. A. and he seemed quite content with the small existing Indian Independence League and I. N. A.

His Secretary, Mr. Deshpande, took down the notes of our talk and after about half an hour Mr. Rash Behari took leave, stating that he was too busy and would be leaving for Singapore the same day. He instructed his Secretary to contact us later on.

Ultimately it was Mr. Rash Behari's unconscious pro-Japanese leanings and his pro-Japanese approach to the question of Indian Revolution that led to his clashes with the Indian Army leader, Captain Mohan Singh, and the dissolution of the first I. N. A.

CHAPTER III

Mohan Singh Forms I. N. A.

After our interview with Mr. Rash Behari Bose, we were asked by the Japs to get ready to proceed to Singapore. Those were the last days of October, 1942, and the tense and critical days of our movement. Those were the days which changed the whole course of the future Indian Revolution. The clock of revolution was set back for over a year, during which time the British got the chance to prepare militarily to meet, the joint I. N. A. and Japanese onslaught. Ultimately the delay in attack led to the failure of the Indian Revolution. Here I shall deal with the growth of the movement from the very beginning. It would be seen that the Japs showed good intentions up to October, 1942, but changed their attitude in later days and this ended in the dissolution of the first I. N. A. While in Rangoon I met various leaders of the Indian National Army, including Lt.-Col. Gill, 2nd-in-Command, next only to the G. O. C., Captain Mohan Singh. The various civilian and I. N. A. leaders threw light on the circumstances which led to the formation of the first I. N. A. and the Indian Independence League.

To explain the crisis we must first describe the events that led to the formation of the I. N. A. and the

Japanese policy in those days. The Japanese declared war on Britain and the United States on the 8th of December, 1941, and almost simultaneously Jap armies started their advance in all directions. First capturing Hongkong and Shanghai and then encircling Singapore and bombing Rangoon, they created panic among the whole of the East Asiatic civilian and military population. British propaganda had allready succeeded in convincing the people that the brutal Japs would not spare the life of anybody and as the armies would advance "they would rape and molest women and Indian business houses would be occupied by Japanese business men." But the facts proved contrary to British propaganda. After the capture of Hongkong, though the Japanese took the Indians and the British army men as prisoners of war, the civilian employees and the business houses were least interferred with by them. So it is no wonder that the Indians in Hongkong had to revise their opinion about the so-called "Asiatic barbarians, the Japs." Hongkong fell like a house of cards, and the British, who had declared that they would fight to the last man for the honour of King and country, were the first to run and hide in the houses of their Chinese girl friends.

On the Malayan Front, the first bullets were fired on the 8th December, but the Japanese had to meet Indian veteran soldiers, who were unfortunately commanded by British officers and who after putting up stiff resistance for 48 hours were ordered by the British Commanders from Jitra (Thai-Malayan frontier) to retreat. The retreat turned out to be non-stop. As the Japanese advanced in Malaya, the Indians experi-

enced no trouble at their hands and thus they, like their Hongkong and Shanghai brethren, revised their opinion about the Japs and found them just as good men as any other men were. The fast Japanese advance continued and in a few months' time the fortress of Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese. Immediately after the surrender, Lt.-Col. Hunt, the Commander of the British and the Indian Forces in Singapore, collected all the troops at Farrer Park to hand them over to the Japanese as prisoners of war. He asked the people to obey the orders of the Japs in the same way as they had obeyed the orders of the British; otherwise they would be punished.

This came like a mortal blow to the Indian soldiers, who had already lost face by the defeat at the hands of the Japs. After Lt.-Col. Hunt finished his speech, Major Fujiwara, who took over the prisoners on behalf of the Japanese Government, addressed the Indian prisoners of war, whereas the British prisoners were already despatched to the Changi jail. He said Indians were no more prisoners from the Japanese point of view, as the Japanese had declared war on Britain and not upon the Indians, and henceforth they were under the command of Captain Mohan Singh, who would be their supreme commander and whose orders they must obey. Hearing this, Captain Mohan Singh stood up and he spoke in moving words of the treachery of the British in leaving the Indian Army to the mercy of the Japs and putting a permanent blot on the name of the Indian Army. He asked the Indian soldiers whether they would be ready to fight the British if an Indian National Army was created. At this all cried out in emotional

frenzy that they were all willing to fight against the British armies of occupation in India.

The Japanese army entered Rangoon on the 8th of March, 1942, and found fires still burning in many business quarters of the town. The retreating British army had set fire to the Surti Cloth Market, a purely Indian bazaar and one of the most beautiful markets in the East, where the losses could be estimated at several crores of rupees. The retreating Government kept the Indians on false promises of giving a passage back to India, but instead they gave passages either to Government officials or Eurasians and Englishmen. About half a million Indians, who risked the long journey on foot to the hills of Arakan or the thick jungles of Kalewa, with the hope of going to their respective homes in India, died on the way, sick, hungry, thirsty and fatigued.

Burma saw more of the so-called doggedness of the British than Malaya or Hongkong. Immediately after the arrival of the Japs in Rangoon, the Indian Independence League (Rangoon Branch) was opened, which started doing welfare work for the poor and the diseased Indians and from June onward Indian business quarters were crowded as usual.

Now both the Indian civilian and the Indian military were receiving good treatment at the hands of the Japanese, and for the first time they felt proud of their country because of which they were respected by the Japanese. Indians in East Asia were the best treated men and many of the Chinese girls started marrying Indians to get financial and political security. Meanwhile, Major Fujiwara contacted the Indian civilian leaders and explained to them that Japan was ready to

help the Indians in organising an I. N. A. to fight against British rule in India and to support the cause of independence. They were willing to give help in arms and ammunition and other essential materials. Still a majority of the Indians followed the policy of "wait and watch." By the first week of March, Malayan Indian civilian representatives met in Singapore to consider the feasibility of forming the Indian Independence League. After the Malaya meeting Mr. Rash Behari Bose called for an official Indian delegation to go from East Asiatic countries to Tokyo to decide matters regarding the formation of I. N. A. etc. But instead only a goodwill mission went to Tokyo. Along with many civilians, Captain Mohan Singh and Lt.-Col. Gill went to Tokyo to attend the conference on behalf of the Indian military prisoners of war. It was decided at this conference to start the Indian Independence League with the object "to secure independence complete and free from domination, interference and control of whatever nature." One of the most important decisions was to raise an Azad Hind Fauj and also to call a meeting of all Indians in East Asia at Bangkok in June, 1942.

The Bangkok conference was one of the historic conferences of Indians in East Asia and was attended by 110 delegates from all over East Asia and was purely a conference of Indians, with no direct or indirect interference from the Japanese. All the speakers freely spoke their minds regarding the doubtful motives of the Japanese. Many vehemently criticised Japanese imperialism. Sixty to seventy resolutions were passed and serious and heated discussions took place on each of the resolutions. The Army shared about 50 per cent of

the seats in the conference. The Indian Independence League was now officially launched with its motto, "Unity, Faith, Sacrifice." The conference laid down that India is one and indivisible; all activities will be national in character; sectional, communal or religious basis is tabooed; the programme and plan of action will be in line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National Congress. The framing of the future constitution of India and the formation of Government would be done only by the freely elected representatives of the people of India. The conference also decided to organize an army of 150,000, under the direct control of the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League. The Fauj must be accorded the powers and status of a free national army of Independent India on a footing of equality with the army of Japan. It was laid down in clear terms that the Fauj shall be used only for operations against foreigners in India for the purpose of securing and safeguarding Indian National Independence and for no other purpose. The Council of Action was to consist of a President and four members, of whom two were to be from the Azad Hind Fauj. The Council of Action was given the mandate to assure itself that any military action it contemplated was to be so timed that it synchronised with a revolution in India, with a simultaneous upheaval in the British Indian Army. The conference laid it down clearly that the Japanese Government should respect the territorial integrity and recognise the full sovereignty of India free of any foreign control, influence or interference of a political, military or economic nature. No Indian would be classed as an enemy alien nor Indian property would be confiscated by

the Japs as enemy property. The conference adopted the national flag of the Indian National Congress as its own flag. Captain Mohan Singh was unanimously elected the G. O. C. of the Azad Hind Fauj and his election was followed by a speech by Lt.-Col. Gill, the seniormost Indian Army officer, fully supporting the choice of the newly elected G. O. C. German, Italian, Thai and Nippon Government representatives were present at the opening of the Bangkok conference. According to the resolution of the conference, the Indian Independence League, East Asia, set up its Headquarters at Bangkok in the month of July and started organising and establishing its branches all over East Asia. Still the function of the Indian Independence League was mainly social welfare work and political propaganda. The League's ramifications in Burma and Malaya were busy increasing their membership. People were flocking to the League as they could enjoy better privileges by being its members.

The Azad Hind Fauj opened its headquarters at Mount Pleasant, Singapore ; incidentally, the place where no Indian or Asiatic was allowed even to walk. The British prisoners of war were put under the charge of the G. O. C., Captain Mohan Singh, and were sent to the Changi Jail by him for safe custody. It was a jail which in British times had a bad name and was mainly meant for Asiatics. The British were so afraid of the Indian guard that, in spite of no orders from the I.N.A. authorities to salute the guard or others, they would salute even ordinary sweepers. The British N.C.O.'s vied with each other in becoming the bearers of the I.N.A. officers in charge of the jail, as by this method

they could have a few of the *bakshish* cigarettes or the cigarette-ends and the remnants of the dishes. The Police High Commissioner of Rangoon had to sweep the dirty streets of the town where he had served as a big boss. Seeing all this, our Indian officers and men, who were despatched to East Asia to work as the pillars of British Imperialistic structure, were finally overcome by their national sentiments and were ready to do their all for the nation.

Slave Burma too was on the march. Crossing the Thai border, the Japs passed on towards Moulmein where, except for the natural check of the Sittang River which the Japanese easily overcame, they did not have to cross any more hurdles. How did the Burman respond to the entry of the invaders? How did the grandchildren of Great Bandoolla, who fought for his country's independence to drive out the British, take the Japanese invasion? Burma, like any other slave nations in the East, was fighting in her own way against Imperialist Britain. In 1931, Syasan's rebellion (popularly known as the Tharrawaddy revolution) had shaken the very foundations of the British regime in Burma. This was the second rebellion after Bandoolla's Rebellion in 1895. It would not be out of place here to mention this hero and his rebellion, as 1931 has a bearing on the Burmese attitude which they took up in 1941-42, against their masters, the British.

This rebellion was very much in the nature of India's War of Independence of 1857. Syasan, a Buddhist monk, with a few hundred of his guerilla bands, captured the district of Tharrawaddy and routed the British and the British Indian Army stationed there. In a historic

well worded proclamation issued from Tharrawaddy, he declared war on Britain. The fight between the Burmese and the British forces, continued in North Burma without defeat to any party or any settlement for over a year. The British called fresh contingents, composed of Indian troops, to reinforce their armies fighting against the Burmese. The Indian armies came with new weapons and, with their superiority in arms and equipment and with their greater numbers, they quelled the revolutionary forces. Syasan could not be found, but many of the leaders of the revolution were arrested and shot. The outcome of this revolution was the setting up of a Thakin Party (Thakin means Lord in the Burmese language). This party openly challenged the British authority. The implication of the word Thakin and the zeal of the leaders of this party had a very great charm and appeal for the youth of Burma. Thakin Thanthundg and Thakin Aungsan, two young leaders, came out as the accredited leaders of the party. Aungsan was then only a young law college student. He continued working for the party and the party continued preparations for a fight against the British at a favourable opportunity. Just when the war clouds were hovering over the whole of East Asia, Aungsan with a few of his comrades, planned to cross over to China and thence to proceed to Russia. He attempted to traverse the North-Eastern Burmese border, but his plan was detected. Later a party of some twenty or thirty men crossed over to Thailand, where Aungsan and his comrades fell into Japanese hands. Aungsan because of his Communist views was finding it difficult to be a participant in the Japanese war, but there was no other way to work

for the independence of his country except by alliance with the Japs.

The Japanese gave military training to these young men, and this batch of Burma Patriots laid the foundation of the Burma Independence Army. Though the length of the period they spent in training is uncertain, it is generally accepted that Aungsan and his comrades did not receive military training for more than six months. As the Japanese advanced into Burma the strength of the Burma Independence Army continued rising higher and higher. In driving out and chasing the already fleeing British army, the B.I.A. played quite a brave role along with their allies, the Japs. Any Burman who liked fighting and could secure for himself a khaki uniform became a member of the Burma Independence Army. B.I.A. were given the same ranks as the Japanese and, along with the Japs, they received instruction in the Japanese language through the Japanese commanders. Having driven the British out of Burma, Aungsan who by now was Lt.-Col. Aungsan heaved a great sign of relief, but still there was another enemy in the shape of a friend and an ally who was to be got rid of. He had to face the practical imperialism of the Japs. For the first year of the occupation of Burma, the Burmese as a nation were clinging to the Japs for political and social relationships. Many Japs were getting married in Burma and of these marriages more than 30,000 Burmo-Japanese children were born on Burmese soil. Burmese girls belonging to the highest social circles mixed freely with Japanese officers. Burma of October, 1942, had grown materially quite prosperous, as with the help of the B.I.A., the Burmese

• had looted Indian property and were now all busy making money by selling it.

After the Bangkok conference the I.N.A. headquarters started functioning in the proper army manner, the Indian National Army Act was drafted. Major D.C. Nag was appointed Judge Advocate-General and was authorised to draft the I.N.A. Act. Words of caution in Hindustani were coined, army uniform was slightly changed from that of the British army, methods of salutation were changed and many more new things were introduced. The I.N.A. was segregated from prisoners of war camps. Arms were given to the I.N.A. in September and the regular small arms training started. Knowledge of the Hindustani language was made compulsory in the I.N.A. and those who did not know it were asked to learn it. Unlike the British Indian Army, the I.N.A. started common kitchens for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. A few thousands who refused to join the I.N.A. did so because they were afraid of risking their lives in a second war, which they might be called upon to fight against the British. As members of the I.N.A., they had to run the risk of losing their comfort, their arrears of pay and may be even their lives in fighting against the British. So it was purely for personal reasons and not for any feelings of loyalty towards the British that these non-volunteers refused to join the I.N.A. I.N.A. officers fixed their pay at a rate less than

I. N. A.'s Pocket Allowance Sepoy to General.

			Rs.
Sepoy	...	11	2nd Lieutenant 90
L-Naik	...	18	Lieutenant 100
Naik	...	22	Captain 130
Haveldar	...	25	Major 180
Sub-Officer	...	70	Lieut.-Col. 210
B Class	...		Colonel 300
A Class	...	80	General 500

the pay of an equivalent rank of a prisoner of war, and their diet too was not very superior to that of their brothers. The names of those who played a major part in the First I.N.A. headquarters or as battalion or regimental commander deserve a passing reference. They were Major N. S. Bhagat, brother of Bhagat, V. C. Major Prakash, Lt.-Col. Zuman Kiani, Major Gulzara Singh, Lt.-Col. S N Hussain, Major Dara, Major Gurmeet (All-India hockey players who represented India in the world Olympic). Lt.-Col. Bhonsle who commanded a Garhwal battalion during the last days of Singapore was appointed the Commander of the Hind field force. An I.N.A. Officers' Training School was founded in Singapore where Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz was appointed the first Commandant, but unfortunately when the cadets were still under training the school had to be closed down temporarily because of the dissolution of the First I.N.A. The total strength of the I.N.A. under G.O.C. Captain Mohan Singh remained at 20,000, with another 10,000 waiting to join, who were popularly known as surplus volunteers. The V.C.O. (Viceroy's Commissioned Officers) class was abolished and the V.C.O's, were commissioned as officers after undergoing minor training. I.N.A. regiments were named after the "Big Three" of India, Gandhi, Nehru and Azad¹. Many

¹ The I.N.A. came into existence officially on 1st September, 1942. It was a military formation and its object was to fight the British in collaboration with the Japs to gain independence for India and free it from British rule. Its organisation was as follows :—

1. Hind Field Force Group (an Infy. Regt).
2. Three Guerilla Regts., v.z., Gandhi, Azad and Nehru. Each Regt. had 3 Bns., and each Bn. had 3 Coys. The function of the Guerrilla Regts. was guerrilla warfare as their name implies.

of the resolutions passed at the Bangkok conference were being put to execution by the Azad Hind Movement, army and civil leaders. But unfortunately just when zero hour was about to strike and the Indian National Army was ready to be sent to the Burma Front, the crisis came because of Japanese imperialistic tactics, to which the Indians refused to submit. On the side of the Japanese Major Fujiwara was replaced by Major-General Iwakurua as the head of the Kikan, who gave his junior staff a long rope to interfere in our movement's progress.

3. The 'S. S.' or Special Service Group, which afterwards became known as the Bahadur Group. The function of this group was sabotage, espionage and infiltration,

4. The Intelligence Group whose function was chiefly the collection of front-line intelligence.

5. The Reinforcement Group whose function was to hold up posted personnel of the I.N.A. and supply men as required. Later it assumed the function of taking over newly captured P. W. of the Indian Army during operations in Burma with a view to winning these over and their despatch to I.N.A. Units.

6. In A. F. V. Bn. consisting of a few armoured cars and carriers and there were other ancillary Units.

CHAPTER IV

First I.N.A. Dissolved

Unfortunately for us when the whole Indian community in East Asia was stirred with a strong desire to participate in the freedom movement, the Japanese started sabotaging the movement. Since October, 1942, one of the various political questions which had been discussed by Indian patriots in East Asia was whether the Japanese were genuinely interested in India's independence or whether they only intended enslaving India. At the moment conflicting political views prevailed amongst East Asiatic Indians. Some believed in strengthening the Indian Independence Organisation rather than pinning faith on Japanese promises, for they believed that it would be dangerous to help the Japanese in their march into India ; while many believed that, as it was impossible for the British to stand up to Japanese invasion, it was only a matter of a few months that the British would be driven away from India and, if they did not go with the Japanese and try to save Indians in whatever way they could, they would be lacking in patriotic duty. So they concluded that Japanese entry into India did not depend upon the Indians' willingness to help or refusal to help. It would be foolish for them to sit back when the whole world was in a state of revo-

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lution. A few civilians and a couple of officers also believed that a revolution could be worked up in India by winning over Indian civilians and the British Indian military to the I.N.A. But they argued that, if the Japanese blasted their way into India without any Indian National Army or any other Indian political organisation, those in India who would like to join the I.N.A. or the freedom movement would have no opportunity to do so and the rotten and demoralised antinational element would instead help the Japs to subjugate India for ever.

Such were the currents and cross-currents of thought. Of course, the situation was very embarrassing. At this juncture General Mohan Singh adopted a decisive and firm attitude. He was clear in his mind that he would not allow the Japanese to use Indian national forces as their tools. He determined to uphold national dignity and to impress upon the Japs, that the Indians would not assume any subordinate position. Consequently General Mohan Singh and other Indian leaders in Malaya and Burma fearlessly spoke against the ulterior imperialistic designs of the Japanese. General Mohan Singh further adopted a retaliatory attitude. He even humiliated the Japs whenever he could. Even a Jap general had to wait at his bungalow for hours together, if he called on him without appointment. He insisted upon Jap soldiers saluting I.N.A. officers. Japanese soldiers felt insulted and thought it humiliating to salute the ex-P. O. Ws., whom they thought they had defeated on the battlefield. General Mohan Singh did not mince matters. He declared it openly⁶ at public meetings that in case the Japs tried to utilise the

I.N.A. for their own purposes as stooges, the I.N.A. would use the same rifles against them with which they were going to drive their imperialist rulers out of India.

Some people think that General Mohan Singh misjudged the Japanese intention and acted precipitately in antagonising them which resulted in losing the greatest chance to achieve freedom for India at the most opportune time. The writer holds no brief for the brave General, but will only describe the circumstances which led Captain Mohan Singh to suspect the *bona fides* of the Japs. It has already been mentioned that in the months of June, July, August, September and October, General Mohan Singh and several other I.N.A. and civilian leaders went about East Asia exhorting the P.O.Ws. and the civilian population to join the army of freedom. At that time every Indian felt great pride in fighting for his country's freedom. Young Indians were eager to join the fight for the freedom of their country. They had seen with their own eyes how easily and quickly the Britishers had been driven out of Burma and Malaya and now they proudly looked to the time when they would enter India as the liberators of their motherland. In short, a wave of patriotism was surging throughout East Asia and Indians were burning with passion to follow their leaders. It was at this stage that the Japs began to sabotage our activities for independence. Our experience with the Japanese in November and December showed that they wanted to boss over everything and act as leaders of the Indian Independence Movement. The Malayan Territorial Committee, as well as the Azad Hind League in Burma, found that

they were not allowed to work unfettered by the Kikan officers, who interfered in everything patriotic and progressive. The Japanese attitude became clear when the Japs started keeping their own intelligent service to spy on the League's activities. In Burma in spite of the I. I. League's protests the "Swaraj Young Men Training School" as well as the Indian Cadets School of Indo-Japanese interpreters at Maymyo, was being virtually run by Japanese officers for their own benefit. When Mr. B. Parshad, the President of the Burma Territorial Committee, raised his voice in protest, he was maliciously dubbed a British spy by the Japs. Mr. Desh Pande, the Secretary of Mr. Rash Behari Bose, was almost on the point of having a hand to hand fight with a Jap officer. Captain Awata, when the latter passed insulting remarks about Indians. The same was the condition in Malaya. The Japanese started meddling with Mr. Raghvan's Penang Swaraj School, which was being run on Socialist lines, which the Japanese would not tolerate. Not only this, the Japanese went so far as stealthily to remove Mr. Raghvan's boys and send them to India to sabotage the British war effort and thus assist Japanese imperialistic designs. This was done in spite of Mr. Raghvan's vehement protest.

The Japanese were running their own spy schools at different places where the men, who were receiving wireless and sabotage training, were directly under their own supervision and many unwilling men too had to work under them. The Council of Action, which was functioning at Synon, was receiving complaints from different branches of the India Independence League in East Asia and was not able to remedy them in

any way The prestige of the I.I.L. was declining in the eyes of the Indians living in East Asia. An intolerable situation arose when the Japanese expressed their intention to take charge of the prisoners of war themselves, which was gross violation of the promises given to G.O.C., Mohan Singh by Major Fujiwara. Of course this was stoutly resisted and refused by our General. Worse still was the case of Indian anti-aircraft companies, which were being used by the Japanese. But when the personnel of those companies expressed their keen desire to join the I.N.A. and General Mohan Singh consequently asked the Japs for handing over the control of these companies to him, they bluntly refused to do so.

From all quarters news of Japanese ill-treatment of Indians was reaching the Council of Action. Whosoever infiltrated into India was sent directly by the Japs. Indians were sent to the firing line without the I.I.L. or the I.N.A. knowing anything about it. All this was horrible. Those of us who objected to it were dubbed British spies. In order further to illustrate the aggressive and imperialist attitude of the Japs I give here my own experience in the matter. Once I secretly went to see Mr. Parshad, the President of the B. T. Committee, and Mr. Lathia, the Chairman of the Rangoon Branch. When I was talking to them, a Japanese, an Iwakuru Kikan officer, butted in without saying anything. He turned towards them and told them off in a very rude and insulting manner. I felt greatly insulted, but all that I could do was to lodge a protest.

Japanese imperialistic ambitions were blatantly ex-

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pressed through the Jap Army and Navy Songs. At one of the parties arranged in our honour, our Japanese hosts sang us their national songs. The gist of the first song was "Japanese armies will be parading in Melbourne. Tojo will be taking the salute in New York and my grandfather will be catching fish in the Ganges." When it came to the last line, I shouted: "None of your grandfathers; it will be mine."

A few days later we sent a three-page letter to the Japanese Government through the Iwakuru Kikan office under the caption. "For our Japanese Allies" wherein we stated that:

1. The entry into India should be mainly made by the I.N.A.

2. The I.N.A. needs the help of only Japanese planes and tanks. The I. I. League should be given arms to equip the volunteers' army that could be raised from civilians in East Asia.

3. The I.N.A. should be treated as an allied army and the Council of Action should have a status equivalent to the status of a free Government.

4. The Japs when they enter India with the I.N.A. should respect the religious sentiments of the Hindus and the Musilms.

5. There should be the currency of the Indian Government in India and not the currency of the Japanese Government.

On the third day of its acknowledgment by the Japanese we were called to the Iwakuru Kikan office. One Major-General, one Colonel, a Major, two Captains and a Lieutenant interpreter were present there. Our letter had been translated into the Japanese language

and the Colonel started discussing it with us point by point.

Regarding the first question, he asked us why did we think that the entry into India should be made mainly by the I N.A. We told him that the Japanese were not liked by the Indians and entry by the Japanese into India would be taken as an aggressive attack and there was every possibility that at some stage Indians might organise a people's militia and thus start a fierce fight against the Japs.

Col. "But we have heard that Indians like us."

K. "Indians not only don't like you, they positively are anti-Japanese. Whatever may be their reasons for being so, but the facts are there"

After holding discussions on the first four points, we discussed the fifth dealing with currency.

Col. Kitabe : "The Japanese Imperial army can't use any other currency except its own, even if it is on Indian soil."

We tried to explain to the thick-headed warrior politician that this would lead to terrible misgivings in the country and the revolution that we viewed would become an impossibility. He started shouting angrily something in the Japanese language, which was discreetly not translated by the interpreter.

The talk had taken a very serious turn and we expected no mercy from the Japs, whom we understood well by now. The question was of India's honour, and on the question of our country's honour we expected no mercy from any quarter. We told the Jap Commander that the struggle for India's independence had continued for over a century and would continue till India was free, though the present circumstances did help us. We

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were ready to fight as allies of the Japs, if they helped us, and without them, if they did not. Hearing this the haughty Colonel got up and went away, but the Major politely told us not to mind all that the Colonel had said. The conversation finished at that and we drove back to our hotel.

Some days later my friend and I were called by Lt.-Col. Gill. It was again a secret meeting and we did not tell the Japanese anything about it. The proud officers of the Iwakuru Kikan rather felt insulted about it. We gave a letter for Shri Rash Behari Bose through Lt.-Col. Gill who was flying to Syonan, mentioning our doubts about the Japanese intentions, and gave him an account of the Japanese mischievous ways in Burma. The letter was strictly confidential and private. Unfortunately for us the letter fell into the hands of the Japs when Col. Gill, was arrested. Immediately after that we too were arrested.

On December 10, 1942, my comrade and I were having our lunch at the Bombay Restaurant, Rangoon (our residential hotel), and were taken to the Japanese military police headquarters. After taking down our names, etc., the Kimpe Del (Japanese military police) locked us up in an extremely insanitary congested cell, 12 ft. by 10 ft in size, where were huddled together as many as 21 prisoners. There were Indians, Burmese, Chinese and Afghans with us in that cell. Most of them were arrested for anti-social and political crimes. Our blanket (two of us were given one blanket quite insufficient to cover both of us) was full of lice. We were given no plate or cup and had to put the scanty rice supplied to us in our hands or on a piece of paper. No bath was allowed us for full one month. Some

of the Burmese locked up with us were suffering from the filthiest types of infectious diseases and were receiving no treatment at all. Every day a few of the unfortunate prisoners were taken out of the cell and beaten mercilessly in order to extort confessions. Our cell had a latrine bucket kept in a corner and when one person might be eating another might be answering the call of nature in that stink pot. For the first time after full one month we were allowed to have a bath, which naturally we enjoyed greatly. Our health had considerably deteriorated as a result of this inhuman treatment.

Very heavy bombing was going on around our jail building in Rangoon and almost every inhabitant left the town, except the Japanese military police and a few others who were on town duty. Bombs were falling just in front of our building. Many of the panicky prisoners used to run about the little cell like mad men, imploring the Japanese to provide them with some shelter. Their importunities always fell on deaf ears. The hardhearted Jap sentries would themselves use shelters to protect themselves from the exploding bombs, but they would shout at the prisoners and silence them. Life dragged on for over three months like that and in the meantime we developed diarrhoea and then dysentery. But we remained firm in our determination and unyielding. After three months of this hellish life in the cell, we were removed to Col. Suzukis Hospital as patients of dysentery where after about a month's stay we recouped our health and were later on confined to a bungalow till Netaji's arrival in Burma.

• Let me come back to the story of the movement I have already stated that since October, 1942, the

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Indian leaders of the military and civilian members of the Council of Action were unanimous in condemning the Japanese policy towards Indians in East Asia. General Mohan Singh, who had acted before with firmness and determination in organising the I.N.A., was now finding it difficult to play second fiddle to the Japanese. After giving repeated warnings to the Japanese Government through the good offices of the Iwakuru Kikan (a Japanese liaison body) he was forced to take the final decision which for the Indian Revolution and the Japanese war proved irretrievable. I.N.A.'s misgivings with regard to the Japanese led to a misunderstanding between General Mohan Singh and Shri Rash Behari Bose. Shri Rash Behari sincerely believed that he would be able to make the Japs rectify their mistakes by seeing the top leaders of the Japanese Government in Tokyo. Shri Rash Behari argued that, as the I.N.A. gained more and more strength, the world events and the course of things would surely force the issue of Indian Independence on the Japs, whereas General Mohan Singh and most of the other officers thought differently and wanted to give a definite ultimatum to the Japanese Government through their G.O.C. By December, General Mohan Singh and Shri Rash Behari Bose completely fell out, because of their serious political difference so much so that one would not see the other. Many in the I.N.A., dubbed Shri Rash Behari as a traitor, who had no love for India and was pro-Jap as his son was serving in the Japanese army (his only son was a cadet in the Japanese Army School). Some of the I.N.A. soldiers tried to fling mud at Shri Rash Behari by spreading all sorts of unfounded rumours about him. Knowing the situation in the army, Mr.

Rash Behari tried immediately to make personal contact with the army officers, but there too he did not fully succeed in convincing them of his viewpoint. The Japanese wanted to take the I.N.A. to Burma and while the troopships were waiting in Singapore harbour to carry them to the front closer to India, G.O.C. Mohan Singh refused to allow that till the I.N.A. status was fully decided by the Japanese Government as an independent army. Lt.-Col. Gilani and Mr. Menon (two members of the Council of Action) completely concurred with General Mohan Singh.

A few days later an ultimatum, comprising various political points, was handed over to the Japanese Government on behalf of the G.O.C., I.N.A. Over the consideration of this ultimatum the Council of Action had to sit in regular session for many days without reaching any definite decision regarding the dissolution of the I.N.A. because a few of its members did not deem it a wise step at that juncture. Though Premier Tojo had declared Japanese good intentions regarding the freedom of India, he had always cleverly left many things vague and the Council of Action refused to trust the Japanese Government without a written agreement.

Finally, to put the Japanese sincerity to the test, General Mohan Singh asked for a written assurance only from Tenno Heika (the Japanese Emperor) and not even from the Japanese Government. The Japanese Government refused to declare the existence of the I.N.A., as an independent army to the world, though many of their high military officers were repeatedly saying that the I.N.A., was an independent army. General Mohan Singh wanted the I.N.A. to be complete-

ly independent of Jap interference and he wanted the Japs to help the I.N.A. only to the extent and in the manner the Council of Action asked for. To expedite the ratification of the Bangkok resolutions General Mohan Singh had been in regular correspondence with the Jap Government since November, 1942, through the mediation of the Iwakuru Kikan and when he received no proper reply from the Japs he took the final decision. In those times Japanese relations with the I.N.A. became so bitter that they cut off their social visits to each other. Along with the ultimatum, General Mohan Singh had sent a letter to the Iwakuru Kikan for the Japanese Government, wherein he had censured the Japanese Government in the strongest possible language. He called the Japanese "wolf in sheep's skin." This letter is reported to have been written in the most uncompromising strain. But though its tone cannot be said to be unexceptionable, the letter vividly showed the heroic spirit of the young General. He was only 32 at the time. This spirited letter showed that the brave young Indian leader was not afraid of the great risks to which he was exposing himself and his army at the hands of the victorious Japs. Things were coming to a climax. The dice had been cast. Zero hour had come. As was expected the Japanese refused to agree on some material points of the ultimatum sent by the G.O.C. The whole lot of the I.N.A. officers and men took the Japanese refusal as a national insult and they all stood as one man under the dynamic leadership of General Mohan Singh.

In the meantime, the arrest of Lt.-Col. Gill took place, which served as fuel to fire. He was suspected of being a British spy by the Japs, though they failed

to give any positive proof of the charges against him. The Council of Action failed to secure his release. In the light of all these untoward circumstances, General Mohan Singh finally decided to dissolve the Indian National Army. Mr. Rash Behari Bose openly challenged General Mohan Singh's decision according to the resolution passed at the Bangkok conference on constitutional grounds as he contended that the I.N.A. was under the authority of the Council of Action and its President. General Mohan Singh's stand was that the I.N.A. owed allegiance personally to him as the oath of allegiance was signed in his name and so could be dissolved by him. All the officers agreed to the dissolution. The relations of the League President and the I.N.A. Commander, which were already bad became worse after this event.

General Mohan Singh called a private meeting of his senior officers to get down to brass tacks of dissolution. After addressing a few words to them regarding the circumstances in which the I.N.A. was formed, he brought his speech to the point where as a patriot, he said, it was impossible for him to continue the existence of the I.N.A. any more. This decision, he said, might affect the whole course of the East Asiatic war and especially the freedom of India, but in the circumstances in which he was placed he had no other choice but to dissolve the I.N.A. He asked for his officers' opinion with a show of hands. All officers spontaneously raised their hands without a single exception. Not satisfied even with this, General Mohan Singh got a written undertaking from his officers that, if the I.N.A. was dissolved none of them would stand for its reformation unless our demands were agreed

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to by the Japs. He asked his officers to be ready for a mass shooting of the I.N.A. personnel by the Japs. He told them, further, that the Japs might resort to brutal tactics—solitary incarceration of the officers and the I.N.A. men and torture. He appealed to the military officers to stand shoulder to shoulder with him as their betrayal at that crucial hour would bring dishonour to India.

Typists had already been called up at this momentous and secret meeting. As soon as the matter was settled, the final decision of dissolution was dictated to them by General Mohan Singh. Sealed envelopes were circulated among the Commanders of all the I.N.A. units to be opened by them only if and when their G.O.C. Mohan Singh was arrested (his arrest was expected at any hour). To challenge the Japs still further the day chosen for the dissolution of the I.N.A. was fixed for the 8th of December, which was regarded as very auspicious and holy by the Japs (the Japanese declared war on Britain on the 8th of December). The next week saw the end of the I.N.A. General Mohan Singh with two of his A.D.Cs, Mr. Iqbal and Mr. Ratan, was arrested at his own bungalow. His arrest took place on an order passed by President of the Indian Independence League, Mr. Rash Behari Bose, who came personally to the I.N.A. camp and read out the order for G.O.C. Mohan Singh's arrest before I.N.A. officers. As there was no I.N.A. man who was willing to make the arrest, Mr. Rash Behari had to seek the help of the Japs to get him arrested. Two Jap officers showed Mr. Rash Behari Bose's order for the arrest to General Mohan Singh and he surrendered to the Japs without any hesitation. The incident passed off peacefully ; without

any firing from either side. The news of the G.O.C.'s arrest spread like wildfire to all I.N.A. camps and the first step taken, immediately after his arrest, was to complete the dissolution of the I.N.A. Now the I.N.A. officers and men told the Japs that they were ready to become prisoners of war as they had already discarded their badges of rank and had burnt all the I.N.A. records. They were quite free to go to the P.O.W. camp. But clever Jap statesmen argued that as Indians were not at war with the Japs, they could not be taken as prisoners of war. The news of the I.N.A.'s dissolution was sent by General Mohan Singh through his secret agents to all Indians in East Asia. The Chinese Communist Party too, was kept informed of the dissolution.

At this stage it is necessary to explain another relevant fact. It is being asked, "Could the Indian leaders in East Asia raise the strength of the I.N.A. to, say, over a lac in the year 1942, with the handicaps they were working under?" There are many who reply in the affirmative and think that with patience and perseverance the I.N.A. leaders would have succeeded in raising the number of men, which would have been quite strong enough to launch a successful campaign on the Indo-Burmese border. General Mohan Singh had put up a concrete plan for recruiting 200,000 Indians, who could be trained as soldiers in a short time. Fifty thousand Indian soldiers were already prepared to join the I.N.A., but there were arms available only for twenty thousand.

The Qaumi Song in General Mohan Singh's time was,

"Sare Jahan se Achha Hindostan Hamara.

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The Indian morale in Burma and Malaya, the main citadel of the movement, was so high that all labourers (including dock labourers, numbering 15,000 in Singapore) were willing to become freedom-fighters and to do their utmost for the cause of their country. If about a lac of I.N.A. men had inserted a wedge anywhere inside the Indo-Burmese border, they might have been joined by many more of their countrymen from the Indian Army and the civilian population in India, and a revolution in India would have surely occurred.

We feel proud of the first I.N.A. which showed to the whole world that Indians could be willing workers for freedom and could rise far above any mercenary motives in a fight for a noble cause. By refusing to carry on the movement when they were treated as inferiors by the Japs, they showed a dauntless spirit and the traditional Indian courage. Those of the first I.N.A., who did not join the second I.N.A., could not be accused of lacking patriotism. People may differ as to the line of action taken by Mr. Rash Behari Bose in his attitude towards the dissolution of the first I.N.A. but some leaders of the Azad Hind Movement have rightly given him credit for continuing the activities of the Indian Independence League in spite of very serious obstacles from within and without—obstacles which were put in his way by his own co-workers and by the Japanese. If he had not kept the organisation alive after the dissolution of the first I.N.A., it would have been difficult for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to build up such a strong political organisation and declare the 'Azad Hind Government' at war with Britain and America in so short a time. We are thankful to General Mohan Singh and his co-workers

for building up the Indian National Army, which neither owed allegiance to the Japanese nor to the British, but whose allegiance was only to Mother India.

The first I.N.A. brought out talented political and military organisers who, under the British, had no chance of handling any job which required initiative and leadership. From an army which bore the stigma of defeat at the hands of the Japs under a British command, a dauntless and brave National army was created by a young Indian army captain. General Mohan Singh started the unique experiment of unifying India on a common basis and, in the short span of a few months, from the ill-disciplined, ill-clothed and ill-equipped Indian soldiers of diverse castes, communities and religions, hailing from different parts of India, he converted them into an army of well-disciplined, well trained and fully-unified men. The British Army ranks were renounced and all officers were commissioned as 2nd Lieuts in the I.N.A. Hindustani became the official language of the I.N.A. which had to be learnt by the rank and file of the army¹, irrespective of their provincial language. The General also introduced a common kitchen, hitherto unknown to the British Indian Army.

¹ Promotions :

The G.O.C. Indian National Army is pleased to make the following promotions in the I.N.A, subject to the approval of the President, Council of Action, Indian Independence League :—

To be Majors with effect from 10th September 1942 :—

4. 2/Lt Shahnawaz Khan.
9. 2/Lt. P. K. Sahgal
13. 2/Lt. G. S. Dhillon.
38. 2/Lt. D. C. Nag.
41. 2/Lt. Babu Ram.

(Sd.) M. Z. KIANI,
2/Col.,
C.G.S., H.Q., I.N.A.



COLONEL EHSAN QADIR
Minister for Manpower

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The army caution badges and uniform evolved in General Mohan Singh's time, continued under Netaji's command, with minor alterations here and there.² We will be but fair to the G.O.C. if we say that his sacrifices and clashes with the Japs made matters easier for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in his relationship with the Japanese Imperialist Power. Those young men who had to suffer or perish in building up the first I N A would be entitled to the respect and regard of all Indians. Among these patriots we respectfully remember men like Gyani Pritam Singh, Swami Satya Nand Puri, Captain Akram and K. A. N. Aiyar, who died in a plane crash while going to attend the Tokyo Conference.

² Major D. C. Nag produced the following types of I.N.A. badges in the first I.N.A. trial.

A circular shaped armband with cross Congress flags. This was worn by every member of the I.N.A. in Capt. Mohan Singh's time. This sample is an officer's and other ranks wore an inferior band.

A pair of triangular shaped collar badges with Congress colours (Ex. E).

Exhibit F—A brass cap, badge, which was worn during the second I.N.A. with the motto "Unity, Faith and Sacrifice" Ex. ("F").

Exhibit G—A pair of shoulder titles of the I.N.A. rank of 2/Lt (one blue stripe) Ex. "G".

Exhibit H—A pair of shoulder titles of the I.N.A. rank of Colonel (three golden stripes and an emblem representing 'Sudarshan Chakra' (Ex. H).

Exhibit I—A pair of shoulder titles of the I.N.A., rank of Major-General (as worn in the second I.N.A.) Ex. 'I'.

Exhibit J—And an I.N.A. badge, a small round metal disc with the Congress colours, the party badge, and this was worn by all ranks in the second I.N.A. (Ex. J.).

CHAPTER V

Military Bureau

Whereas in the past army camps were full of enthusiasm and eagerness, now sullenness and despair prevailed. The dissolution of the first I.N.A. was followed by frustration and depression among I.N.A. leaders. Still the aged Colonel did not lose spirit nor hope. Their first step was to save the army and, to that purpose, an administrative committee with the object of providing food and clothing to the ex-I.N.A. personnel was set up. Its membership consisted of Lt.-Col. A. D. Loganadan, Lt.-Col. Bhonsle, Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir, Lt.-Col. Zaman Kiani (Chief of the General Staff in the first I.N.A. and Major Parkash Chand.

Some far-sighted officers opined that, as the Japanese were cleverly planning to set up a puppet Indian organisation and were thinking of taking Indians of their own choice into India, the people of India would have no knowledge of the Japanese machinations, and anti-British Indians would join hands with them. As soldiers of Indian freedom they decided that they could not wait for all that. They were too high-spirited to waste any time when their country was facing the imminent danger of being overrun by the Japs.

‘ In this period of uncertainty and commotion the

inmates of the camp had to undergo no military training. The badges of rank and the military status of the first I.N.A. had already been finished and its records destroyed with its dissolution. So, the first I.N.A. soldier had become a free-lance. With all the fervour which a soldier had in the times of the General Officer Commanding Mohan Singh, he found it difficult to adjust himself to the newly developed, uncertain and chaotic circumstances.

Indians in East Asia, generally, were waiting for a clear and firm lead. Days, when the Indian National Army should have been victoriously marching into India, were thus being wasted. Revolutionary elements inside India had been waiting for the I.N.A.'s arrival since August, 1942, but the I.N.A. had already missed the bus. Wavell's armies, which had very weak fortifications in Imphal and Chittagong and meagre military preparations in 1942, had by 1943, considerably improved their defences.

In Burma and Malaya, there was a feeling of bitterness, frustration and anger that prevailed between the two allies—the Indians and the Japs.

Mr. Rash Behari and various other I.N.A. leaders lost all patience, thinking it unwise to lose any more time in speculating over Japanese intentions towards India. They resolved to reorganise the I.N.A.—if not to fight against the British, at least to protect the lives and property of Indians in East Asia and India.

Mr. Rash Behari, speaking to the officers at a meeting in Singapore, said: "Comrades, the question of sincerity of the Japs does not arise. Our struggle has

been continuously going on since 1857 against British Imperialism. Our struggle continued even in the last war under the revolutionary leadership of Raja Mohindra Pratap and Hardyal. Then Japan was siding with our enemy, the British. Even now when Japan declared war on Britain, she did not think of India while preparing her strategy, which was completely independent of Indian help."

Further arguing, he said, that, even if it was accepted that the Japanese were going to overrun India, it would be only wise for them to build up sanctions against Japan in the form of a strong and patriotic Indian National Army.

"We have neither money, nor men, nor arms," Rash Behari declared. "We want to fight for our freedom. But how are we to do it?"

"I have to take help from the Japanese, but I do not want a change of masters—Japanese domination in place of British. This was why I organised the Indians scattered all over the East, so that we may liberate our Motherland with our own men and money. I do not want the Japanese to set their feet on the soil of India. But it is not possible to unite and organise the 30 lakhs of Indians, living thousands of miles away, without the co-operation of Japan, as it is beyond our power to reach them or bring them together.

"If Japan had not given facilities for travel, we would not have been able to get to them. Japan is very busy with her war. We shall have to get as much from her as possible by a conciliatory attitude and not by quarrelling. Once we can organise ourselves and raise an efficient army, then we shall be able to conduct our

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war ourselves. The new army will be a purely voluntary army¹ and those who want to leave the old army (the first I.N.A.) can do so."

ENROLMENT FORM OF CIVIL VOLUNTEERS FOR THE AZAD HIND FAUJ (I.N.A.)

You are warned that if after enrolment it is found that you have given a false answer to any of the following questions, you will be punished in accordance with the law laid down by the I. I. L.

1. Name (in block letters.)
2. Address.
 - (a) In India.
 - (i) Village.
 - (ii) Post Office
 - (iii) Thana.
 - (iv) Tahsil.
 - (v) District.
 - (vi) Province.
 - (b) In East Asia.
 - (i) Post Office.
 - (ii) City or Town.
 - (iii) District.
 - (iv) Kampong or Estate
 - (v) Country.
3. Age.
4. What are your qualifications ?—
 - (a) Educational.
 - (b) Linguistic.
 - (c) Technical.

Are you married or single ?

If married, where is your family now ? Number of children alive.

6. Have you ever been imprisoned by the civil power ? what for ?

7. How employed at present ?

8. Have you ever served in the Army ? If so, for how long and in what capacity ?

9. Are you willing to go and serve wherever the I. I. L. orders you, whether in the I. N. A. or in any other capacity ?

I,.....solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to sign the attached pledge.

CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLING OFFICER

I certify that the answers to the above questions were given and recorded by me (or in my presence) at the _____ day of _____

Signature of Enrolling Officer.

MY ADVENTURES WITH THE I. N. A.

He fixed a date for interviewing the officers, when they had to state their reasons clearly for joining or not joining the second I.N.A. With a few exceptions, all old comrades wholeheartedly joined the second

DESCRIPTION ON ENROLMENT (See instructions below).

To be completed by R. O. or (Local Chairman, or Secretary of the League).

Age	years.	Chest	Minimum	Inch.
Height	Ft.	Inch.	Measurement	Max. Inch.

To be completed by Medical Officer.

I consider him _____ for the Army. (Insert here 'fit' or 'unfit').

Identification marks

Date

Place

Medical Officer.

Note.—(a) General Health must be above average. Should have no disability which is likely to interfere with Military duties.

(b) Men who have no family encumbrances here will be preferred.

(c) Men who can read and write at least in their mother tongue would be preferred.

PLEDGE

1. I hereby voluntarily and of my own free will join and enlist myself in the Civil Volunteers Organisation of the Indian Independence League.

2. I solemnly and sincerely dedicate myself to India and hereby pledge my life for her Freedom. I will serve India and the Indian Independence Movement to my fullest capacity even at the risk of my life.

3. In serving the country I shall seek no personal advantage for myself.

4. I will regard all Indians as my brothers and sisters without distinction of religion, language or territory.

5. I will faithfully and without hesitation obey and carry out all orders and instructions given to me by the Indian Independence League and I will carry out all just and lawful commands of my superior officers under whom I may be required to serve from time to time.

Date

26

Place

(Signature).



GENERAL BHOOSIE, I.N.A.
when still in the British Army.

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I.N.A. A few careerists, who had joined the first I.N.A. under very favourable circumstances, when the Axis victory seemed so close and certain, now found it a God-send opportunity to get out of it. As they saw the Axis Powers suffering setbacks, they did not think it any more profitable to remain in the I.N.A. as that was likely to expose them to risk which they were never prepared to take. But there were some who left the I.N.A. sincerely feeling that they were right in the stand taken by them.

Reorganisation of I.N.A.

On the 15th February, 1943, the I. N. A. was reorganised, with Lt-Col. Bhonsle as Director of Military Bureau, Lt-Col. Shah Nawaz Khan as Chief of the General Staff, Major P. K. Sehgal as Military Secretary, Major Habib ul-Rehman as Commandant. Officers' Training School, Major Mata-ul-Mulk (brother of Lt-Col. Burhan-ud Din) as Reinforcement Commandant, Major A. D. Jahangir, in charge of Enlightenment and Culture, and several others.

The previous Army badges and ranks were returned to the I.N.A. personnel and a regular army was formed. To begin with, though it did not possess the same zeal and gusto as the first I.N.A. it was fully conscious of its national duty.

The Indian Independence League was reorganised into 12 departments, of which the Recruiting Department played a major and important role under the wise and wideawake secretaryship of Lt-Col. Ehsan Qadir, who had already earned wide popularity in East Asia by putting up extremely intelligent, thrilling and

patriotic programmes from Saigon Radio, especially in Punjabi.

Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir worked day and night to recruit the maximum number of civilians from East Asia and his appeals proved very effective. Volunteers came forward in their thousands. His stirring words fell on willing and patriotic ears and the rush of civilians at the recruiting windows in Malaya was much more than expected or required. Even those who had never handled arms joined the I. N. A. in large numbers.

Dr. Laxmi's Sacrifices

An Indian Women's Department was opened at the headquarters to carry on the work of relief, social welfare and propaganda. Dr. Laxmi, the well known public worker of Singapore, became its first Secretary. She left her lucrative practice to take up national work and later on gave even her rich dispensary for use as an I N.A. hospital.

In her stirring speech in Singapore in April, 1943, she declared: "The men had for the most precious one year (1942-43) been groping in the dark. They in that period had never thought of inviting women and now that they have called upon us to work with them at this crisis, I assure them on behalf of my sisters that we women will do our level best to keep them on the right path."

Her spirited words were received with deafening cheers. As soon as the Women's Department was started, a large number of women workers came forward to assist Dr. Laxmi.

The aims and objects of the second I N A. being

the same as that of the first, its organisers and leaders did not feel in any way dismayed or disheartened by the dissolution of the first I.N.A. and they adopted the old firm attitude towards the Japanese.

After the dissolution of the first I.N.A., Indians had become braver and bolder than before. On various occasions even the I.N.A. under training recruits hammered the Japs in Kuala Lumpur and other places and on most of those occasions when the matter came up before the higher authorities it was the Japanese who had to apologise to the stern Indian commanders.

Along with this the I.N.A. leaders started secret military preparations for fighting the Japs, if they showed any imperialistic designs on India. In those days the Japanese assurance to the Movement leaders that Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose would be arriving from Germany at the first available opportunity was too good to be believed. The I.N.A. leaders counted upon the Indian revolutionary leaders at home, in case Mr. Bose did not arrive.

From the experiences of the I.N.A., the Malayan Communists, Javanese and Burmese nationalists too sound that the only real sanction against the Japanese and British Imperialists was their own armed strength and their collaboration with the oppressed Asiatic nations against the Imperialist Powers. Even the Malaysians, who had no experience in military matters and who were used only as coolies by the British, started learning the use of weapons to safeguard the interests of their country. The lethargic Malaysians became excellent Home Guards in a short period.

The Chinese, Javanese and Burmese all co-operated

with the I.N.A., and in that they felt the sense of security which was born of a brotherhood of South-East Asiatic membership. Our nationalists and the nationalists of Java were quite intimate and formed an unwritten mutual assistance pact. Most of the details, which are not available now will come out at a later date and the world will learn thrilling things about the I N.A. heroes who formed an East Asiatic Brotherhood bloc and roused love for freedom and patriotic consciousness amongst the people of South-East Asia.

The Japanese tried to separate one community from the other, but they did not succeed in their nefarious designs. It is to the credit of the brave spirit and the sense of statesmanship of the top-ranking officers of the Indian National Army and the Azad Hind Sang that the co-prosperity sphere which the Japanese were so keen about forming and for which the Japanese were busy in doing the maximum propaganda, could not be formed.

The bad name which the Indians had got because of successful sinister imperialistic propaganda and perhaps partly owing to the emigration of Indian labourers in the East, was blotted out by the persevering efforts of vigorous and energetic Indian young men of the freedom movement. When the neighbouring Asiatic people saw the determined Indian young men bravely taking up the challenge of the Japanese the conquerors and still not losing heart in their fight against British Imperialists, they were surprised. It served as a great inspiration to them.

Seeing its patriotic fervour, some of the British agents who had taken up the work of sabotaging the



Lagere's National song inspires the I N A.

I.N.A.'s freedom fight changed their unpatriotic attitude and came of their own accord straight to the leaders of the I.N.A., bringing with them their secret wireless sets and confessing all about their spy activities which they had undertaken against the I.N.A. They were so moved by I.N.A. patriotism that, in certain cases, they took upon themselves even to work against the British. Many of the above-mentioned spies were sent to Malaya by parachutes and in submarines in 1942.

In April, 1943, another conference of delegates from all the territories of East Asia was called at Singapore. At the meeting, Sri Rash Behari announced that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose would succeed him as leader of the movement.

Netaji's Arrival in East Asia

One fine evening I had a pleasant surprise when I heard Netaji's speech from Tokyo Radio. I heard Netaji speak to the Indians in East Asia. With the exception of All-India Radio (called anti-India Radio in East Asia), the long awaited arrival of the great leader was joyfully broadcast throughout East Asia. My comrades and I were officially informed by the Japs that Mr. Subhas Bose had arrived in Tokyo and would soon be taking charge of the Indian Independence League in East Asia.

As we knew later on, Netaji had arrived somewhere in the beginning of May, 1943, in Penang by a German submarine (which news was kept strictly confidential) and from Penang he flew to Tokyo to settle Indian political affairs with the Japanese Government. Mr.

Rash Behari Bose, too, accompanied him on that mission.

Mr. Subhas Bose, for whom I had waited for one whole year, had come! He had come to East Asia after a very eventful stay in Europe. Mr. Subhas Bose, whom an Allied news agency had declared dead in a plane accident in March, 1942, was with us in the East in 1943 hale and hearty, challenging British might. He had come with all his dynamic fervour

As is well known, after his miraculous escape from India, he reached Germany and there, with the help of the Indian civilians living on the Continent, he formed the I.N.A., popularly known as the Indian Legion. After finishing his work in Germany and having made personal contacts with the leaders in Europe, he came to East Asia, fully prepared to counteract British imperialist strategy.

Some say that he came too late. They are of opinion that if he had come to the East when he was invited by Mr. Rash Behari Bose after the Bangkok Conference in June, 1942, the co-ordination of the revolutionary forces inside and outside India would have solved the question of India's independence once for all.

Mr. Subhas Bose was the idol of Bengal—Bengal which occupied the most strategic position being the foremost province touching the border of India and which was considered to be the home of Indian revolution. At the clarion call of Netaji, Bengal would have risen as one man, leading the other parts of India in a victorious march to freedom.

Annexe (a) to Military Bureau Gazette Serial No. 9 (2), dated 17th April 1943

Lt.-Col. J. K. BHONSLE, D.M.B., I.I.L.

Lt. MIRZA INAYAT ALI BEG, A.D.C.

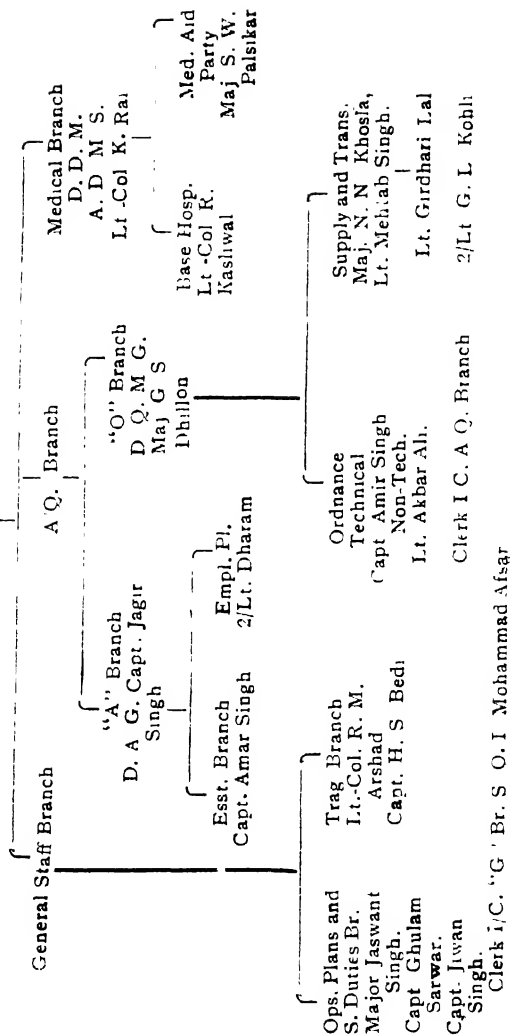
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After the dissolution of the first I.N.A. a Military Bureau was set up under the Command of Lt.-Col. Bhonsle. These two charts give the Headquarters staff and its Administration and the complete list of Army staff.

Annexe (b) to Military Bureau Gazette Serial No. 9 (2), dated 17th April 1943

Lt.-Col M. Z. KIANI, Army Commander

A. D. C. Lt ABDUL MAJID, Personal Clerk
Headquarters, I N.A



GUERRILLA REGIMENTS

Coy. Comd. Coy. Comd. Lt Haq Nawaz Khan

Annexe (d) to Military Bureau Gazette Serial No. 9 (2), dated 17th April 1943.

I HIND FIELD FORCE GROUP

Comd.—Lt. Col S. M. Hussain.

G. 1.—Major J. W. Rodrigues.

G. 2.—2/Lt. Khushal Singh.

Adjnt.—Capt. B. S. Rawat.

Asstt.—Adjnt. Lt. Allahyar Khan

Q. M.—Capt. M. G. Chhibar.

Sapper Offr. S. O. Ibrahim.

Liaison Officer.

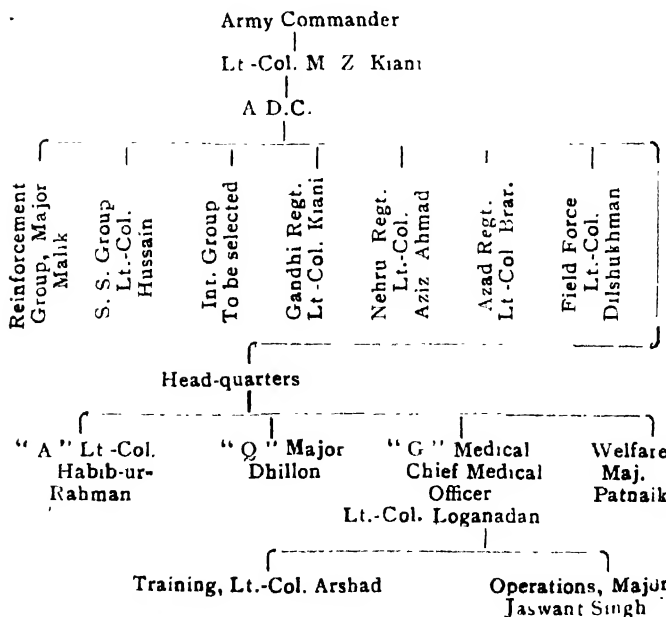
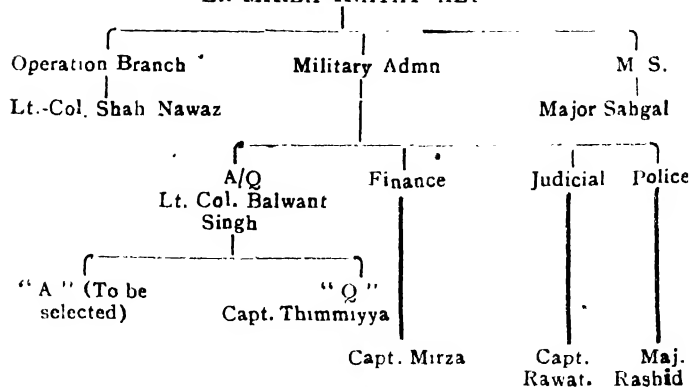
2.Lt. Khushi Ram

Ord Offr.

Inf. Bn. Lt.	II Inf. Bn.	III Inf. Bn	A.F.V. Bn	Hy Gun. Bn.	Eng Coy.	Tpt Coy.	Sig. Coy.
Mir Rahman	2/Lt. Dhanna	Capt. B S.	Major	Capt.	Lt N.R.	Lt. Dyanu	2Lt.
Khan	Singh	Nagi	Mohammad	Mumtaz	Sindhu	Rao	Sadhu
(Temp)	(Temp.)		Raja Khan	Khan		Jadhao	Singh

Annexe to O.N.A. Administration No. 4 dated 21-2-1943.

Director of Military Department, Lt.-Col. S.K. BHONSLE, A D.C.
Lt. MIRZA INAYAT ALI



CHAPTER VI

Netaji Arrives

In his first broadcast in East Asia from Tokyo Radio on June 26th, 1943, Netaji tried to clear the doubts of Indians living in East Asia and urged them to have faith in him. He assured them that, if they give him their confidence, he would lead them to the goal of independence. He emphatically declared that, if British Imperialism had failed to bend his will, no other power on earth could diplomatically dodge him or cow him down. The speech had a reassuring and heartening effect.

He said :

“ I request my friends to trust me. Even the British Government, which prosecuted me throughout my whole life and put me into jail eleven times, could not subdue me.

“ When the clever and powerful British Government could not win me over or crush my spirit, there is no other power on earth that can do it.

“ I do not want to speak anything for Germany or Japan. The speakers in the pay of Britain are describing me as a spy of the enemy. My whole life is an uninterrupted struggle against British imperialism. I have all through my life been a servant of India. I had the

NETAJI ARRIVES

good fortune of being elected twice President of the Congress. I shall, as long as I live, remain the servant of India. In whatever part of the world I may live, my allegiance is, and will remain, for ever to my Motherland."

After settling important matters with the Japanese Government at Tokyo, Netaji came down to Singapore where he was given an enthusiastic reception by all nationalities living in East Asia. He drove through the streets of Singapore—the leader of India and Asia—and spoke at a mammoth public gathering. Without wasting any time he took up the heavy responsibility of the movement.

Requesting Mr. Subhas Bose to take up the charge of the movement, Mr. Rash Behari Bose said :

" I am leaving the charge of the Indian Independence League to Subhas Chandra. I am old. For this task we require a leader who can take the nation on the way to victory. Fortunately for us, Subhas Chandra is among us. From this day he is our leader. Under the leadership of Netaji, India will be able to throw off her shackles."

For him, who had been the President of the Indian National Congress and had gone through ordeals in India and gathered experience in Europe, it was not a very difficult job to carry on the political burden which he was called upon to shoulder. After accepting the presidentship of the East Asiatic Independence League and becoming the Commander of the I.N.A., he started working with juniors in the I.N.A. and the League as if he had known them for many years. Lt.-Col. Bhonsle, who functioned as Director of the Military Bureau,

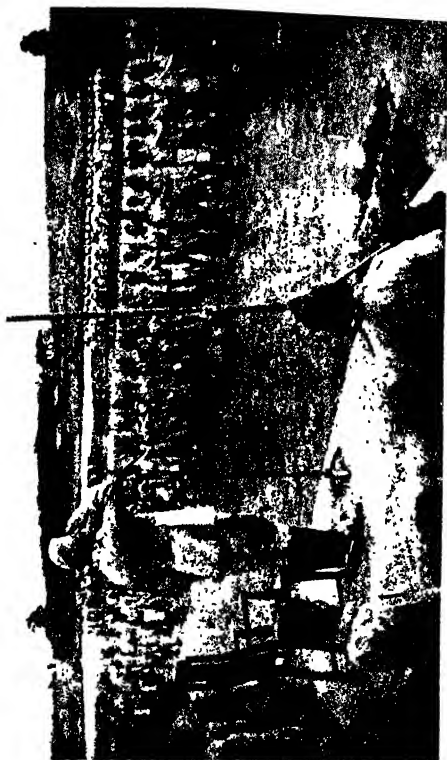
introduced him to various officials and other officers of the army at the Supreme Headquarters in Singapore.

After the formal ceremonies were over, Netaji granted interviews to various prisoners of war and also saw some of the ex-I.N.A. officers. Some officers in the P.O.W. camps openly said that if Captain Mohan Singh would rejoin the I.N.A., they too would join but on account of some unavoidable circumstances it was not possible for Netaji to ensure that their wishes would be fulfilled.

After setting up the Azad Hind Sangh headquarters in Singapore, Netaji paid attention to the re-organisation of the army. Giving the commanders time to prepare for a grand army parade, he invited Premier Tojo to attend the rally in Singapore in the first week of July, 1943.

For the first time the Indian Army held a parade under the command of its own General and under its own national flag. Everybody was rightly proud of having a chance to participate in this grand parade. About 20,000 soldiers marched past before the two great leaders of the East, one standing beside the other. Both stood to attention and returned the salute of the passing army. Netaji stood to attention, with his right hand up in salute, all through the parade for two hours. Numbers of parade photographs were taken by I.N.A. and Jap cameramen, which, when displayed to the public, left a very great impression on their minds.

After the parade { Netaji issued a statement, declaring :



Netain taking the I N A March - past 5 date

NETAJI ARRIVES

“Soldiers of India’s Army of Liberation ! To-day is the proudest day of my life. To-day it has pleased Providence to give me the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India’s Army of Liberation has come into being. This Army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battle-field of Singapore, which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is the Army that will emancipate India from the British yoke.

“Comrades ! My soldiers ! Let your battle cry be : ‘ To Delhi, to Delhi.’ How many of you will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know ! But I do know this, that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the Victory parade in the Lal Killa of Ancient Delhi. Throughout my public career, I have always felt that, though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she lacks one thing—an Army of Liberation.

“Comrades ! You are to-day the custodians of India’s national honour and the embodiment of India’s hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourselves that your countrymen may bless you and posterity will be proud of you. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory.

“For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God

now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight !

“The Azad Hind Fauj is the national army of India and its activities and control will be completely under Indians. We shall not allow a single foreigner to enter India.

“I do not believe that the Japanese will free India. It is the I.N.A. which will enter India. We shall not allow the Japanese to go there. If they try to enter against our wishes, we shall regard them as our enemies. The attainment of the freedom of India is the duty of Indians and we will do it.

“Recruitment to the I.N.A. will be made, not only from among the prisoners of war, but also from the Indian residents here.”

Speaking to the Army on the 10th July, 1942, Netaji said :

“I would tell you quite frankly what made me leave home and homeland on a journey that was fraught with danger of every kind. You know I have been working in the independence movement ever since I left the portals of the university in 1921. I have been through all the civil disobedience campaigns during the last two decades. In addition to this, I have been repeatedly put in prison without trial on the suspicion of having been connected with a secret revolutionary movement, whether violent or non-violent, with which I have been familiar.

“In the light of this experience, I came to the conclusion that all the efforts we could put forward, inside India, would not be sufficient to expel the British from our country. If the struggle at home had sufficed



'With the Burmese Govt. Leaders'

to achieve liberty for our people, I would not have been so foolish as to undertake this unnecessary risk and hazard.'

" To put it briefly, therefore, my object in leaving India was to supplement from outside the struggle going on 'at home. Without this supplementary help from outside, which the national struggle at home so urgently needs, the possibility of success is, in reality, very small. The defeats inflicted on the British by the Axis Powers have shattered British power and prestige to such an extent, that our task has been rendered comparatively easy."

Soon after that Netaji started his whirlwind programme and, in about a week's time, he delivered not less than 1 dozen speeches to the Army, the Indian Independence League and to Indian civilians. He started the Rani of Jhansi Regiment (officially it was started in October) with Captain Laxmi as its first Commander. Dr. Laxmi was commissioned as a 2nd-Lieutenant and was promoted captain after a few weeks.

Netaji sent an I.N.A. officer, Captain Narain, to open a military training school at Shanghai, the centre of the stalwart Sikh police, who joined the Army School in large numbers.

Everything went on at full speed in the Azad Hind Movement in Malaya. The Kikan influence (the Japanese body attached to the Indian Independence League) was slowly waning and, later on, it completely disappeared.

After finishing the headquarters work in Singapore, Netaji flew to Thailand, from where, after a three days' crowded programme, he came to Burma. His arrival in Rangoon was quite sudden and unexpected. We heard

of it only when a Jap officer came running to us in the very first hour of his arrival, and said that we should get ready as Mr. Bose was there and wanted to meet me and my friend. Of course, we felt honoured and delighted at this call.

Meeting With Netaji

The same evening at 9 o'clock, after attending a party given in Netaji's honour by Dr. Ba Maw, my companion, Mr. Tilak, and I were driven to his bungalow where we met his Secretary, Mr. Abid Hassan. Unlike Mr. Rash Behari, Netaji was very well guarded by his I.N.A. bodyguard.

For the first time I was going to meet him. I naturally felt shy. I was told by Mr. Hassan that the national salutation was changed from "Bande Matram" to "Jai Hind" so I should greet the leader with "Jai Hind." Nervous as I was, escorted by Mr. Hassan and accompanied by my comrade, I went to him. Before I could greet the leader with "Jai Hind," Netaji, who was so graciously waiting for us, smilingly stood up and wished us "Jai Hind."

Smartly dressed in a well cut tweed suit, he looked a majestic figure—a born commander. It was a room where some sofas were lying about and, immediately after our interview, some committee meeting was to take place. He enquired about our health and showed great anxiety about it. Puzzled as I was, I enquired of the leader as to who had told him that we were not well. Netaji said that Major-General Sanda (a Japanese Major-General attached to the Hikari Kikan) had told him that we had

NETAJI ARRIVES

been kept in a Japanese cell for a couple of months.

By now I had overcome my nervousness. The leader offering me a cigarette, lit it for me (which I naturally took as a great honour) and we started leisurely chatting. The great leader was so cordial, so comradely and so frank that the feeling spontaneously came that he was one of us. Now I knew why Subhas Bose was so dearly loved by all who came into contact with him.

• He enquired if we had encountered difficulties in our journey from India to Burma. We gave him the full story of our journey and then hurriedly asked him how he had managed to escape from his confinement in Calcutta. Without answering the question, smilingly he asked me : " What do the people in India say about my escape ? " I told him what rumours and conjectures were current in India.

Next Netaji enquired about his family. We told him that Mr. Sarat Bose was ill and was confined in some South Indian jail. We talked also of his mother's delicate health and how worried she was about him. When I talked to him about his mother's worry regarding him, I saw sadness cover his otherwise cheerful face. On a question about the Calcutta police activity, I said that a vigorous search for him continued for a very long time and it stopped only after the police definitely learnt that he had gone out of India.

He affectionately remembered " Bapuji " and anxiously enquired about Mahatmaji's health. Then the conversation centred round various subjects, including the Indian leaders and the Press. He asked

about everybody and everything, practically of political interest in India.

We talked about the Congress position in the 1942 Movement and later on, according to his wish, I gave him a report of the events as I had personally witnessed them and a detailed account of the movement as studied through Press reports. In 1944, the book entitled "Congress Responsibility" fell into I.N.A. hands at the front and was sent to Netaji, who, after reading it, came to know many details through official eyes.

Talking about the Indian Press, he expressed his dissatisfaction with its weak, indefinite and compromising attitude. He thought that the main work of the Nationalist Press was to prepare the people for a fight against the only enemy, British Imperialism. On our enquiry about Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim League, he dubbed the League and the Hindu Sabha as communalist bodies which stood in the way of India's freedom and sternly said: "India must get rid of communalism, if she wants to achieve freedom."

Among the Leftist leaders, practically all, including M. N. Roy, P. C. Joshi, Swami Sahjanand, Jai Prakash Narain, Ram Manohar Lohia, Achhut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali and B. P. L. Bedi, were discussed. He was full of praise for Swami Sahjanand's work and sincerity and talking about Jai Prakash Narain, he admired J. P.'s appreciation of the situation in this war, which, he said, was more patriotic and realistic than that of some other leaders of the Left Wing.

As a student of politics, I was interested in Europe and its political leaders and requested him to tell us something about the leaders of the Reich. He said

NETAJI ARRIVES

that next to Hitler, Goering was the man who was liked most in Germany by the common man, because the Germans saw in him an ideal in every way. They liked his frankness, courage and determination.

Talking about Italy, Netaji said that Mussolini's leadership was rather shaky as, except the Fascist Party and a section of the military, he had no hold on the general people and particularly on the naval forces. The navy was backing up Badoglio, the naval commander.

Finally, he said, that Mussolini's bad health was making him slowly lose his hold over the Italian regime. He referred to his first meeting with Mussolini earlier in the war. Then he had found him in the best of spirits. Later on when he met him for the second time, shortly before his coming over to East Asia, he found him defeated and in an indifferent state of health.

Finally, he talked about the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League and the imperialist attitude of Japanese officials. Talking about the Japs, he said, "We need not bother too much about Japanese intentions and should have faith in our own army and the Indian people." As regards the war, the main thing that would affect the Indian revolution he observed, would be the situation on the Indo-Burma border and our determination to carry the revolution successfully inside India.

Most of the conversation took place in Hindustani. I will always cherish the memory of this long and happy interview and I will always remember my leader, for whom my admiration and love increased more and more with closer contact.

From Rangoon Netaji come back to Singapore. Taking over the command of the Army on the 15th August, 1943, Netaji issued an Army Circular, saying :

“ In the interests of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj, I have taken over the direct command of our Army from this day :

“ This is for me a matter of joy and pride, because for an Indian there can be no greater honour than to be the Commander of India's Army of Liberation. But I am conscious of the magnitude of the task that I have undertaken and I feel weighed down with a sense of responsibility. I pray that God may give me the necessary strength to fulfil my duty to Indians, under all circumstances, however difficult or trying; they may be.

“ I regard myself as the servant of 38 crores of my countrymen, who profess different religious faiths. I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these 38 crores may be safe in my hands and every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in me. It is only on the basis of undiluted nationalism and of perfect justice and impartiality that India's Army of Liberation can be built up.

“ In the coming struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland, for the establishment of a Government of Free India, based on the good-will of 38 crores of Indians, and for the creation of a permanent army which will guarantee Indian Independence for all times, the Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role, we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal, namely, the freedom

of India, and only one will namely, to do or die in the cause of India's freedom. When we stand, the Azad Hind Fouj has to be like a wall of granite ; when we march, the Azad Hind Fouj has to be like a steam-roller.

“ Our task is not an easy one ; the war will be long and hard, but I have complete faith in the justice and in the invincibility of our cause. Thirty-eight crores of human beings, who form about one-fifth of the human race, have the right to be free, and they are now prepared to pay the price of freedom. There is, consequently, no power on earth that can deprive us of our birthright of liberty any longer.

“ Comrades, officers and men ! With your unstinted support, and unflinching loyalty, the Azad Hind Fouj will become the instrument of India's liberation. Ultimate victory will certainly be ours ; I assure you. Our work has already begun.

“ With the slogan, ‘ Onward to Delhi ’, on our lips, let us continue to labour and to fight till our National Flag flies over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi and the Azad Hind Fouj holds its ‘ Victory Parade ’ inside the ancient Red Fortress of the Indian Metropolis.”

Free India Government Established

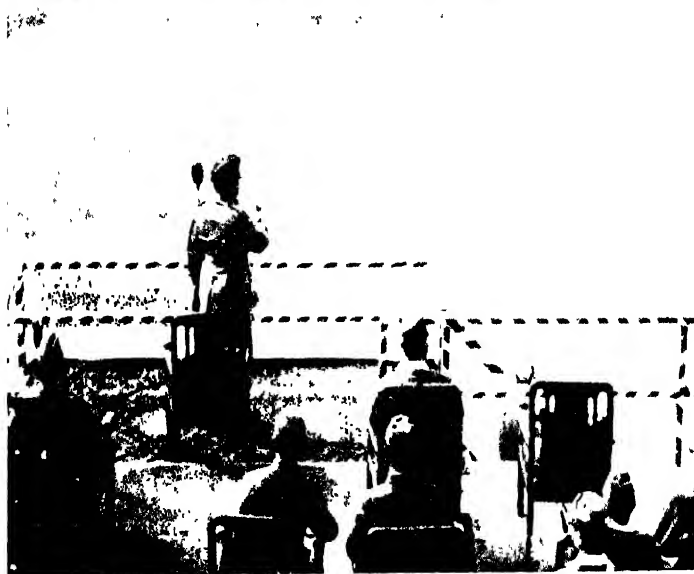
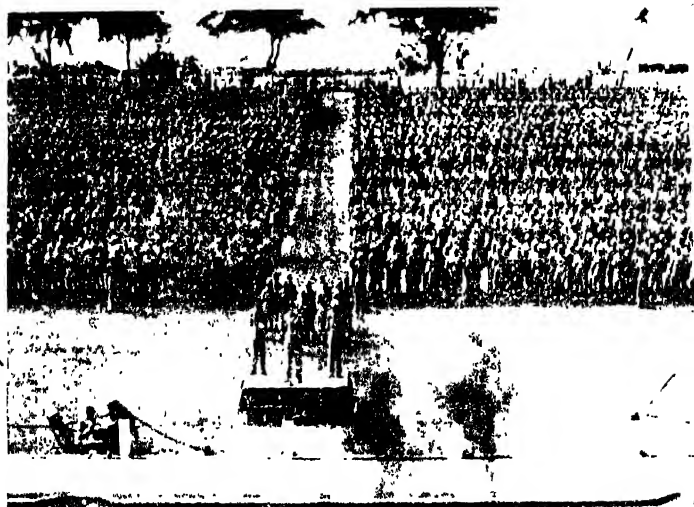
Netaji set out on an extensive tour programme of Malaya, Burma, Thailand and French Indo-China. Wherever he went, in East Asia the Indian Independence League was placed on a better footing and the programme of mobilising men, money and material was accelerated to full speed.

In Malaya, Mr. Yellappa (a Singapore barrister) was using all his influence to collect money from the merchant classes. while Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir, with the help of his Assistant, Major Hassan, combed the whole of Malaya enrolling civilian recruits in the I. N. A.

New Interpreters Training Centres were opened at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Saletar and new army training camp was opened at Ipoh.

About the 25th of September, Netaji returned again to Burma, on a short tour, to settle certain major problems regarding the training of army cadets and the shifting of the Azad Hind Sangh headquarters to Burma. His stay in Rangoon lasted only three days and during those 72 hours he hardly slept for 6 hours. The rest of the time he was busy working.

A day before his departure I went to see him at



The Historic Declaration of War on the Anglo-Americans.

5 a.m. and found him still working. I could see that he had not slept the whole night. Out of curiosity I asked him: "Sir, did you not sleep last night?" He replied: "Han, kuchh kam tha, waqat nahin mila." I enquired of his Secretary whether he always worked so hard and learned that it was nothing very unusual with him and that it was normal for him to work day and night.

Before going to sleep, Netaji said his prayers for about half an hour and, meditating, stretched himself in bed. He had a staunch ascetic faith in Providence. In spite of sleepless nights, Netaji always looked fresh. While in Rangoon, he visited the grave of the last ruler of the Mughal Dynasty the Emperor Bahadur Shah.

After this Burma tour, he flew back to Singapore. These were the days for speed and action. The Independence League had already been organised. The army was brought up to a high standard of efficiency and Netaji was confident of his commandere' loyalty. He had already given a hint in July, 1942, that he was contemplating the formaton of a Provisional Government of Azad Hind and now, when the ground was fully prepared, he called a conference of delegates from the League branches all over East Asia.

A meeting of the Indian Independence League was held in the Cathay Building at Singapore and Subhas Chandra Bose and other Indian leaders took part in it. Representatives from distant Indo-China, Hongkong, Siam, Java, Sumatra etc., were present. About 7,000 to 8,000 men attended the conference.

The conference commenced exactly at 10-30 a.m; Col.

Chatterji was the first speaker. After him Subhas Chandra Bose rose amidst a tremendous outburst of cheering. Many a camera clicked as he made his appearance on the dais. He spoke in Hindi about the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. The gathering listened, spellbound.

He said : " Our Independence is at hand and it is the duty of every Indian to undertake the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Free India and of conducting the fight for freedom. But, with all the Indian leaders in prison and the people at home totally disarmed, it is not possible to do it from within India. The patriotic Indians in East Asia have, therefore, undertaken the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Free India and of conducting the last fight for freedom."

Subhas Chandra rose to take the oath of allegiance to the Government. He began to read it in a firm voice—

" In the name of God I, Subhas Chandra Bose, take this sacred oath that, to liberate India and the 38 crores of my countrymen, I will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life."

And here his voice was choked with emotion. The crowd silently observed him, deeply moved.

He then conquered his emotion and began again :

" I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of the 38 crores of Indian brothers and sisters. This shall be, for me, my highest duty.

" Even after winning freedom, I will always be

FREE INDIA GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED

prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom."

His voice rose and fell as different emotions swayed him. When he finished, the crowd shouted : "Subhas Chandra Bose ki Jai, Azadi hukumat-e-Azad Hind ki Jai."

After Subhas Chandra Bose, the Ministers took the oath, one by one. The crowd repeated with them :

"In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that, to liberate India and the 38 crores of my countrymen, I will be absolutely faithful to our leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, and will always be prepared to sacrifice my life and all I have for the cause."

After this the declaration of the Azad Hind Government was read—

"After their first defeat at the hands of the British in 1757, in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of onehundred years. The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And in the pages of that history the names of Siraj-ud-Doula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Thampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Maharashtra, the Begum of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala of the Punjab and last but not the least Rani Luxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaja Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib, are forever engraved in letters of gold.

"Unfortunately for us, our forefathers did not, at first, realise that the British constituted a grave threat

to the whole of India and they did not, therefore, put up a united front against the enemy. Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move and, under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857, they fought their last war as free men. In spite of a series of brilliant victories in the early stages of this war, ill-luck and faulty leadership gradually brought about their final collapse and subjugation. Nevertheless, such heroes as the Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib live, like eternal stars in the nation's memory, to inspire us to greater deeds of sacrifice and valour.

“ Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while, but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people, in their endeavour to recover their lost liberty, tried all possible methods, namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage and, finally, armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately, in 1920, when the Indian people, hunted by a sense of failure, were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience

“ For two decades thereafter, the Indian people went through a phase of intense patriotic activity. The message of freedom was carried to every Indian home. Through personal example, people were taught to suffer, to sacrifice and to die in the cause of freedom.

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From the centre to the remotest villages, the people were knit together into one political organisation. Thus, the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1937 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces, they gave proof of their readiness and capacity to administer their own affairs.

“ Thus, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's liberation. During the course of this war, Germany, with the help of her allies, has dealt shattering blows to our enemy in Europe, while Nippon, with the help of her allies, has inflicted a knock-out blow to our enemy in East Asia. Favoured by a most happy combination of circumstances, the Indian people to-day have a wonderful opportunity for achieving their national emancipation.

“ For the first time in recent history, Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in tune with their countrymen at home, but are also marching in step with them along the path to freedom. In East Asia, in particular, over two million Indians are now organised as one solid phalanx inspired by the slogan of ‘ Total Mobilisation.’ And in front of them stand the serried ranks of India's Army of Liberation, with the slogan, ‘ Onward to Delhi,’ on their lips.

“ Having goaded Indians to desperation by its

hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the goodwill of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation. Assured of the enthusiastic support of the civil population at home and also of a large section of Britain's Indian Army and backed by gallant and invincible allies abroad, but relying in, the first instance, on its own strength, India's Army of Liberation is confident of fulfilling its historic role.

"Now that the dawn of freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a Provisional Government of their own and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government. But, with all the Indian leaders in prison and the people at home totally disarmed, it is not possible to set up a Provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad, to undertake this task—the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and of conducting the last fight for freedom with the help of the Azad Hind Fouj organised by the League.

"It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the

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Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set upon Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country, in trust, for the Indian people

"The Provisional Government is entitled to and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences, cunningly fostered by an alien Government, in the past.

"In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice, we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strive for India's freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and all their allies in India, and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in final Victory, until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation.

"Having been constituted as the Provisional Gov-

ernment of Azad Hind by the Indian Independence League in East Asia, we enter upon our duties with a full sense of the responsibility which has devolved on us. We pray that Providence may bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland. And we hereby pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her freedom, of her welfare and her exaltation among the nations of the world."

"Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind by :

"Subhas Chandra Bose (Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister of War, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army)."

A few of the Ministers and Advisers were included later on. This is the complete list of P. G. A. H. Ministers and Advisers :

1. Capt. Mrs. Laxmi (Women's Organisation).
2. S. A. Aiyer (Publicity and Propaganda).
3. Lt.-Col. A. C. Chatterji (Finance)
4. Lt.-Col. Aziz Ahmed.
5. Lt.-Col. N. S. Bhagat.
6. Lt.-Col. J. K. Bhonsle.
7. Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh.
8. Lt.-Col. M. Z. Kiyani.
9. Lt.-Col. A. D. Loganadhan.
10. Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir.
11. Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz.
12. Lt.-Col. Munawar Hussain.

WOMEN UNCOVERED



Netaji accompanied by Colonel Lakshmi inspects the Barracks of Hansi Regiment

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13. Mr. A. M. Sahay (Secretary with ministerial rank).
14. Mr. Rash Behari Bose (Supreme Adviser).
15. Mr. Karim Gani (Minister without Portfolio).
16. Mr. Bashir Ahmad (Adviser).
17. Mrs. Chittambran.
18. Mr. Parma Nand.
19. Mr. Devnath Dass.
20. Mr. D. M. Khan.
21. Mr. A. Yellappa.
22. Mr. J. Thiby.
23. Mr. Surdar Ishar Singh (Adviser).
24. Mr. A. N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser).
25. Mr. Nambeer.
- ✓26. Col. Allagappan.
27. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
28. Mr. A. N. Raghoon.

Formation Of Rani Of Jhansi Regiment

On the 23rd October, Netaji declared open the Rani of Jhansi Camp in Singapore.

Women's Departments in Singapore and Burma were given military uniform and a regular army of girls was formed. Netaji declared open the camp at Singapore, while his representative, Col. Allagappan, opened a camp at Rangoon. Gaudy blouses and sarees were replaced for young girls, by coarse khaki uniforms. Heavy soldiers' boots were put on, in place of smart high-heeled sandals. Jewellery was completely discarded and sacrificed at the alter of the Chained

Mother. Those of the soldier girls who found their hair very long and unmanageable had, it cut short.

Thus prepared, they were ready for strenuous training. The hot afternoons were spent on the parade grounds of Rangoon and Singapore instead of in cosy drawing-rooms. Hands used to knitting and the piano, had to handle a heavy rifle.

The Pathan and the Sikh soldiers shouting, "Thik Nahin, Jawan," "Akal Se Kam Lo, Jawan," "Hasna Nahin Jawan," had become a daily feature.

Life in the beginning seemed unbearable and intolerable. And it demanded super-human efforts on the part of these girls to continue their training, but there was one consolation; the supreme satisfaction of obeying 'Our beloved Netaji's order.' It was not the instructor on the parade ground who demanded the supreme sacrifice; it was the call of Netaji; it was the call of Mother India.

The example of their sisters in India reminded them of their duty in East Asia. The stories of the brave Rani who fought on the battlefield of Jhansi inspired them beyond imagination, each girl wanting to follow in the footsteps of the brave Rani. The bayonet exercises were the worst. With the rifle in hand, running to stab at the dummies many swooned on the parade ground, but the instructor showed no mercy and, after a little rest, the "fair-sex Jawans" had to get up again for the same work. The instructor's voice was already audible in their ears, 'Usi Kam Ke Liye Utho, Jawan.'

Tired Eve took hold of the heavy rifle, crossed a few hurdles and fell down again; again she got up and

lo! The bayonet pierced the dummy and the girl was happy. After a few months' training even the bayonet exercises were easy.

The first batch of girls completed their training in six months and learnt to handle all arms, including rifle, the Thomas machine-gun, the Bren-gun and the tactical exercises. The Japanese generals were amazed at the skill of these young soldiers and congratulated Netaji and Dr. Laxmi on their efficiency.

Capt. Laxmi

Captain Laxmi, the Commandant of the Rani of Jhansi Brigade, was sister, guardian, guide and Commandant of the Regiment, all in one. She was full of regard and consideration for them. When Dr. Laxmi was transferred to Maymyo hospital, the transfer was greatly lamented by all ranks who had to serve under a new C. O.

Even small girls showed great keenness to join the Rani of Jhansi Regiment in Singapore; when Captain Laxmi rejected a small girl of 13 on the ground that she was under age, she wrote a touching letter to Netaji appealing for an interview. The girl was so keen on joining the Regiment that she started crying before Netaji. Netaji was highly moved and the small girl was allowed to join. A Madrasi girl in Mandalay was saved from drowning in the Irrawady. She took this dreadful decision because she was not allowed to join the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

Captain Laxmi showed reluctance in admitting women whose husbands or guardians were unwilling. But

still when women threatened suicide on their refusal to be admitted into the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, no option was left but for Captain Laxmi to take them.

The Regiment included women from all sections of society. There were wives and daughters of doctors, advocates, station masters, merchants-writers and hotel proprietors, along with hundreds of girls from the Malayan rubber estates.

Two training camps were opened; one in Singapore and the other in Rangoon. Educated and smart girls were selected, by a Board, for officer training. Girls flocked from all over East Asia to serve their country. There were girls from Saigon, Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang and from all over Burma.

The food served in the Rani of Jhansi Brigade was slightly better than the food rationed in other I. N. A. camps. Extra milk, eggs, fish and meat were provided. A daily programme of spiritual and political lectures was chalked out. Netaji himself used occasionally to come to inspire the young daughters of India.

After the national anthem, the Brigade used to chant a vow in these thrilling words: "We take an oath that we will be true to our country and our leader, and will not do anything which may bring dishonour to our Motherland or to our beloved Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose."

Memorable Sight

The Regiment was famous for its long route marches, which at times covered more than 20 miles a

day. Its marches through the streets of Singapore and Rangoon were well-known. It was a memorable sight to see hundreds of girl soldiers, carrying rifles, singing their national song in melodious tunes and bravely marching forward in complete uniformity.

Many girls also received training in propaganda and front line sabotage work, while others joined the "suicide squads." When the I. N. A. was advancing on Imphal a company of the Regiment went to the front to help their brothers in the march, but unfortunately had to retreat when the I. N. A. suffered a major setback. This did not have any demoralising effect on these brave soldiers.

When the British captured Mandalay and the I. N. A. soldiers were going to the front to meet the enemy, many of these brave girls could not resist the temptation and offered themselves for front line duties. But Netaji did not allow them to fight an enemy who, he thought, would not show any consideration even for women, if these young girls fell into his hands.

A few weeks before the fall of Rangoon, the Brigade was ordered to leave Burma for Thailand. It is rumoured that they had to fight the enemy near Moulmein. After the I. N. A.'s surrender in Rangoon, all these girls were kept under strict watch by the military authorities in Burma.

At the opening ceremony of the Regiment, Netaji said :

"The opening of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment Training Camp is an important landmark in the progress of our movement in East Asia. We are engaged

in the great task of regenerating our nation. And it is only in the fitness of things that there should be a stir of new life among our womenfolk.

"Our past has been a great and glorious one. India could not have produced a heroine like the Rani of Jhansi, if she did not have a glorious tradition. In the same way as we have figures like Maitreyi in India's ancient days, we have the inspiring examples of Ahalyabai of Maharashtra, Rani Bhawani of Bengal, Razia Begum and Nur Jehan, who were shining administrators in recent historic times, prior to the British rule in India. I have every confidence in the fertility of the Indian soil. I am confident that India, as in the past, will surely produce the best flowers of Indian womanhood. I may at this juncture say a few words about the Rani of Jhansi.

"When the Rani of Jhansi started her flight, her age was only twenty. You can easily imagine what it meant for a girl of twenty to ride a horse and wield a sword in battle. You can easily imagine what courage and spirit she must have had. The English Commander who fought against her said: 'She was the best and the bravest of the rebels.' First she fought from the Jhansi Fort, and when the Fort was besieged, she escaped with a party, to Kalpi from where she put up another fight. When she had retreated from the battle-front, she made an alliance with Tantia Tope, attacked and captured Gwalior Fort and, using that fort as the base, she continued the battle. In this great battle she died fighting.

"Unfortunately, the Rani of Jhansi was defeated.



The First Proclamation.

•It was not her personal defeat ; it was the defeat of India. She died, but her spirit can never die. India can once again produce a Rani of Jhansi and march on to victory."

Declaration of War

The next day Netaji declared war on England and America at the Padaung mass rally opposite the stately municipal buildings. Shouts and slogans rent the air and volley after volley of frenzied cheering greeted the news. For an hour the vast audience of over 50,000 was uncontrollable. The people broke through the cordon at several places, trying to reach the platform. When Netaji asked them to stand where they were and raise their hands to express approval, numberless hands went up.

The Pathan soldiers lifted their rifles, placed them on their shoulders and gave their consent by a show of bayonets. They started singing revolutionary songs in Pashto and were mad with frenzied joy. The Japanese generals present there saw the dynamic power of the Indian leader and glanced at one another in astonishment. They saw the hero and his worshippers.

The Sikhs threw their turbans in the air as a sign of great joy and excitement. The leader was moved beyond words. The next day, Netaji inspected the Fauj, accompanied by his Ministers.

Mobilising the manpower in East Asia, Netaji spoke at a meeting held on 25th October, 1943.

It was a meeting of Indian merchants of Malaya in Singapore. Subhas Chandra spoke for over

an hour and appealed to the merchants for monetary help in the fight for freedom. In the course of his speech he said :

“ Friends, I would first give my hearty welcome to our sisters and brothers who have come to attend this conference from all parts of Malaya. You have come here to take part in a conference, which, I am confident, will prove to be of great significance and importance. We have heard considerable assurance of loyalty towards our great cause and this conference is going to put that loyalty to the test.

“ I do not propose to deliver a long speech, because long speeches are not necessary. First, I would appeal to you to realise what each one of you would do, if the responsibility of liberating India were on your shoulders. To free India is a responsibility which lies on the shoulders of every Indian in East Asia, and I hope that you will realise this great responsibility which has devolved upon you.

“ When an army goes to the battlefield, the responsibility of fighting and winning rests equally on every individual in the army, whether he is an officer, an N.C.O., or an ordinary soldier. Only that army will win every soldier of which is ready to do his duty. You must realise that the Indians in East Asia have to day become an army which has to fight and win. As in the case of every soldier at the front, so also on every Indian in East Asia great responsibility has fallen. I know that some of you are rich, some of you are poor. I want every Indian in East Asia to do his duty.

“ When in an army someone is appointed as an officer, it becomes his duty to go forward himself and to

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lead others to go forward. Syonan has assumed great importance in our fight in East Asia. The headquarters of the Indian Independence League is here, the headquarters of the I. N. A. is here and only recently the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has also been established here. Syonan was once a fortress of Britain, but to-day it has become the headquarters of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia.

"Syonan's relation to other places in East Asia is the same as the relation of a commander to the troops of his regiment. The success of a battle not only depends upon the way every soldier performs his duty, but it also depends on the correct lead and right example given by the officer commanding the army.

"You will thus realise that any voice which rises from Syonan will have its echoes all over East Asia; that any action which you take here will have its repercussions all over East Asia. The part which Indians in various parts of East Asia are going to play will greatly depend on the example which you are going to give from Syonan. I want you to remember that your responsibilities are great, because you have to give the lead and you have to provide inspiration to Indians in other parts of East Asia.

"I want you to think for yourselves and visualise what a Free India Government would have done when faced with a grave emergency like a foreign invasion. Supposing India was a free country and supposing there was the danger of an attack by a foreign enemy, what would the Government of Free India do? Would it not have started total mobilisation then? You

could easily understand that this is the normal duty of any free Government. Keeping this fact in mind, I want you to realise what your duties are in our great attempt to get our independence and maintain it.

“ Think also what the procedure would be in a free country when it is in a state of war. Would there be meetings and appeals as in the case with us, so far? No. A free Government, on the other hand, would issue only a call for all able-bodied men between specific ages to assemble at a certain place on a certain day and at a certain hour.

“ Voluntarily and without any grumbling, people would respond to the call. Why? Because people of independent countries know that they have to make sacrifices for their liberty. And when a free Government needs money to defend its independence, it does not proceed to hold meetings and start begging campaigns.

“ On the contrary, a free Government would prepare budgets of its war requirements, think of ways and means to collect that money and, keeping in view the financial conditions of the people, straight-away proceed to levy the necessary taxation. I would ask you whether any man can refuse to become a soldier or to contribute war taxes in a free country. India is not yet free, but we are free in heart and spirit. And by the establishment of the Provisional Government we have become a free people.

“ Now it is our responsibility to liberate India and to establish a free Government in India. If we feel that we are fit for independence, if we really desire

Independence, we should straightaway live and act as we would do if we lived in a free India under the ægis of our free Government at a time of a grave national emergency. Whatever we would have done in a free India in response to the call of the free Indian Government, it has become our solemn duty to do forthwith. Look at the people of Germany and Nippon and how in those countries all the resources of the people have been mobilised by the Government. When it is the duty of a Government to defend its own independence, it has to do it at any cost and it has to pool all the resources of its country.

“Legally speaking, there is no private property when a country is in a state of war. The Government has absolute right over the lives and properties of its people during such emergencies. We too are a free Government.

“If you think that your wealth and possessions are your own, you are living in a delusion. Every life and every property belongs to the nation when it is involved in a war. Your lives and your properties do not now belong to you; they belong to India, and to India alone.

“I have every confidence that if you realise this simple truth, that we have to achieve independence by any means and at any cost and that we are now a free people in a state of war, you will realise that nothing belongs to you, that your lives, properties and everything are no more your own.

“If you do not want to realise this simple truth, then you have another path clearly chalked out for you.

If you do not want to shoulder your duties as a free Indian living under a free Government if ; you do not want independence and if you are not ready to pay the price of independence, you have only one course before you. But remember this. When the war is over and India becomes independent, you shall have no room in a free India. If the Indian Government condescends to take pity on you, the highest act of mercy which the free Indian Government can do, is to provide you with third class tickets to leave the holy soil of India and to go to England.

“ I have heard that some of rich Indians in Malaya are murmuring that I am harassing them. I want to have a straight talk with them so that they can take a straight path hereafter. I have heard that some rich Indians are thinking of changing their nationality to save themselves from making contributions towards the cause of Indian independence ! I have also heard that some are thinking of handing over their properties to the custodians and of claiming them back after the war is over !

“ Then, again, I have heard of people who are thinking of adopting a ruse of promising, say, a lakh of rupees, and trying to gain time by paying that amount in small instalments, hoping that sooner or later we will be going away to Burma and then to India and thus they would be able to evade payments !

“ But they are miserably in the wrong and it is not going to be so easy for them to deceive us and to shirk performing their duties. Whether we are here in Syonan, whether we are in Burma or in India itself, our

organisation shall remain here, because it must remain here to carry on its work till India becomes completely independent. -

"I would appeal to every Indian, whether he is Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or Christian, not to fail in performing his duties. I know who are doing their duty and who are shirking them.

"I have to liberate India and I shall make India independent by all means and at any cost, and I would appeal to you to realise that it is your duty, too, to shoulder the burden whether it pleases you or not. If you want to evade the issue, say plainly that you do not want independence. Then, as I have already told you, a different path lies ahead of you.

"So long as you say you are Indians and you want the claim to make money in East Asia as Indians, you cannot shirk from performing the duties which devolve on you as free Indians. Do not think that it is left to your option to perform this duty or not as you please.

"I have already said in my last speech at Syonan that I am making my last appeal: To-day, I am standing here not to make another appeal; I am not standing here as a beggar, with outstretched hands. I stand here to-day representing the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, which has absolute rights over your lives and properties.

"I assure you, friends, I am not one who is accustomed to tall talking or making empty threats. Whatever I say, I say after the fullest consideration, and I mean what I say. Even my enemies know that I ~~say~~ ^{do} say what I do not mean. I have said that we

have to win India's independence by all means and at any cost and that we have to carry out total mobilisation voluntarily, or, if necessary by compulsion. And I would reiterate to you that I mean what I said.

“ I am speaking at length to you today so that you shall not be under any delusion, so that you may not say afterwards that you were not given the full opportunity to come forward on a voluntary basis. It will be an honourable course for you and I would feel proud if you came forward voluntarily. But if you do not choose to come forward voluntarily, then we are not going to remain slaves on that account.

“ I am really surprised to hear that there are a few people who are saying that it took years for them to amass their money and that they have many children to provide for. If on this account they had refused to make sacrifices in a free India under a free Government, I would ask you to imagine what would have happened to them. Surely, they would have been regarded and treated as enemies.

“ You could either be a friend or a foe ! Everyone who refuses to help our cause is also our enemy, because we are engaged in a life and death struggle today.

“ Look at those who have volunteered to join the Indian National Army and who are now getting the necessary training. They do not know how many of them will live to see India free. They are getting ready with the one thought, of shedding their last drop of blood. They are getting ready to go to a free India or to die on the way. There is no programme of re-

retreat for them. Let the programme of retreat be reserved for Wavell and his army. The British Government have given him promotions and have now made him Viceroy of India, because he has proved himself to be a past master in the art of saving his own life by retreat after retreat.

"The I.N.A. has no plan for saving its life by retreat. While the I.N.A. is getting trained either to march to victory or to spill its last drop of blood on the way, the rich people are asking me whether total mobilisation means 10 per cent or 5 per cent. I would ask these people who are speaking of percentages whether we can tell our soldiers to fight and spill only 10 per cent of their blood and save the rest.

"You could see with your own eyes the spirit which is permeating our young men who have become recruits and our sisters who have rallied to the colours. Fortunately, we are not short of men. The response has been so great that we have enough recruits to prepare for even a long war.

"What we want is a similar response in money and materials. If we were all poor, then we would be justified in seeking foreign help, but there are also rich people amongst us and our foreign friends know it. When our own people have ample resources, it is a sheer disgrace for us to stretch our hands out to others for help.

"When there are brothers and sisters coming forward in large numbers offering their lives, I cannot understand why those who do not want to give their lives are grumbling even to part with their possessions. What is money after all? Compared with life, money is

nothing. Supposing a foreign Government tells you that either you have to give the crore you possess, or your life, surely you would rather choose to part with your crore than with your life !

“ In the same way as young men have come forward to offer their lives, the poor classes have been coming forward voluntarily and with enthusiastic spirit to offer everything that they have. Poorer classes of Indians, like watchmen, washermen, barbers, petty shopkeepers and *gowalas*, have come forward with all that they have. “ And in addition to that, some of them have also offered to become volunteers. Some friends ask me what I mean by total mobilisation. These poor men, who have volunteered not only their possessions, but also their lives, have demonstrated by their own example the exact meaning of total mobilisation.

“ Some of these poor people come to me, and not only do they give all the cash they have in their pockets, but they go further and give me their ‘ Savings bank books, which represent their life savings.

“ Is there not one rich man among the Indians in Malaya who can come forward and say in the same spirit, ‘ Here is my bank-book for the cause of Indian independence ’ ?

“ The Indians, as a nation, believe in the ideal of self-sacrifice. Among the Hindus we have the ideal of the *sanyasis* and the Muslims have the way of the *faqirs*. In our history we have instances of numerous kings who chose to become *faqirs* for the sake of faith, justice and truth.

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Can there be a greater cause, a nobler cause and a holier cause than that of liberating 38 crores of human souls? Is there not one rich man who will come and say, 'Here is my bank-book for such a great cause'?

'If you are not self-sacrificing enough to offer your lives I cannot understand why there should not be even a few among you who could say, 'Spare only our lives,' but we give everything else.'

I shall now proceed to place before you the programme of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. In carrying out this programme, we have to proceed slowly, steadily and systematically as any Government would do. The wealth of Indians in Malaya, according to pre-war estimates, is Rs 100 crores and as, you know, values have increased since then. Usually, a Government makes a yearly budget and, when it is necessary, supplementary budgets are also made during the year. I propose to do the same thing.

"It is up to you either to come forward voluntarily in the spirit of 'total mobilisation,' or you shall have to meet the demands made by us, from time to time, till the war is over.

"My first demand from Malaya is for 10 crores of rupees, which would be approximately 10 per cent of the value of Indian possessions in Malaya. And as in this conference many rich people from Malaya are present, I would expect at least one crore of rupees straightaway and I hope within a month the 10 crores will be forthcoming from Malaya."

Having announced the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and having declared war

on Britain and America, Netaji completed his last revolutionary task of taking the I.N.A. inside India under the leadership of India's own Government—the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

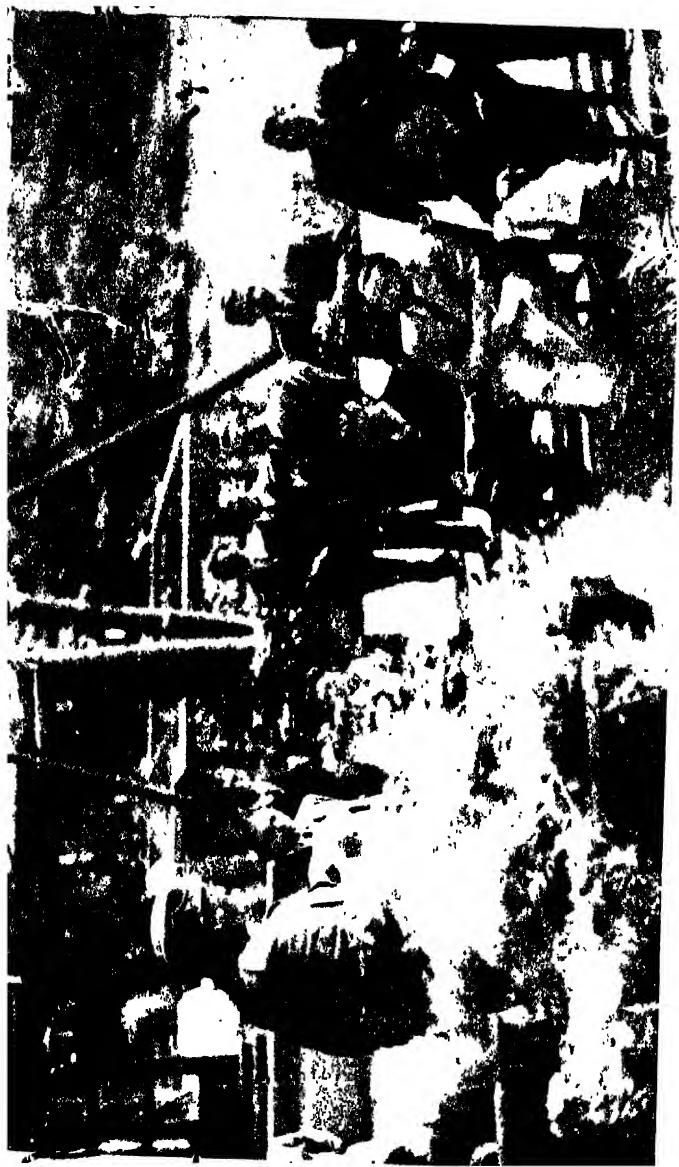
He had declared in his speech that his Government was formed for the execution of the war against India's enemies and for no other purpose. The permanent Government of India, he said, would be chosen by the people of India after India won her freedom. The Indian citizens of East Asia now owed allegiance to their own Government.

In the monthly bulletin issued in December, 1943, the following announcement was published :

“ Indians in East Asia to day are no more the citizens of an alien Power. They are proud citizens of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. To bring this home to the mind of every Indian in Malaya and to rouse our community to a full realisation of the responsibilities of their new status, it has been decided to ask each member of the Indian Independence League to take the oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.”

The prestige of the Government rose beyond the expectations of all of us. The P. G. A. H. was recognised by nine Governments of the world, Germany, Italy, Japan, Croatia, Manchukuo, Nanking, the Philippines, Siam (Thailand and Burma). Our Government was performing all the functions of an independent State.

In order to provide employment for the poor, the Azad Hind Government bought a plot of land in Malaya.



Negro speaking to the World Press

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and gave it free for cultivation to the poor to earn their livelihood.

Well-informed sources disclosed that Netaji wanted the minimum number of civilians as Ministers in his Cabinet. He was inclined to have only army officers as his Cabinet Ministers, but still he could not ignore civilian statesmen and organisers, whose advice was very necessary and without whose help it seemed impossible to successfully fight India's war of independence.

Mr. Menon, an old member of the Council of Action, was lying ill in his house and another member of the Council, Mr. Raghvan, was reluctant to join, as he thought the second movement under Netaji "will only be a repetition of the cruel experiences we had in carrying out the first movement, which had ultimately to be dissolved." Mr. Raghvan preferred to keep out for some time. Mr. Goho, a leading barrister of Singapore, showed much less inclination to join the movement after the first I. N. A. crisis.

Netaji, therefore, selected mostly army men for his Cabinet and only three civilians were chosen as Cabinet Ministers, although a few civilian advisers were selected to help him in his day-to-day work. The civilian Ministers were Mr. S. A. Ayer, Mr. Sarkar and Mr. A. M. Sahay.

Almost all the army representatives on the Provisional Government of Azad Hind had to lead their soldiers in the battlefield—a very rare instance in world history.

Col. Shah Nawaz fought on the Haka-Falam front, Col. Zama (Kayan) and Col. Gulzara Singh fought on

the Imphal front, Col. Munawar Hussain and Col. Ahmad fought in the last campaign in Central Burma in 1945. Col. Loganadan, Col. Alagappon and Chatterjee functioned in an administrative capacity. Captain Laxmi went to the front in Central Burma with a company of the Rani of Jhansi soldiers and Col. Bhongale had to stay in Singapore because of his duties as Chief of the General Staff. Col. Ehsan Qadir went to the front for administrative and revolutionary duties as the leader of the Azad Hind Dal.

Netaji founded an organisation of civilian patriots who were called upon to play an equally important role in this revolutionary war. He set up an administrative school in Singapore, with Mr. Sarkar, his Legal Adviser in the Cabinet, as Principal. Young men flocked to the school. They had to undergo three months' training to brush up their knowledge in the vocational and administrative training which they had received earlier. Mostly, these were skilled men like engineers, technicians, writers, propagandists and ex-British Government servants.

The civilian volunteers had to sign the following pledge: "I hereby voluntarily and of my own free will join and enlist myself in the Civil Volunteer Organisation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. I solemnly and sincerely dedicate myself to India and hereby pledge my life to her freedom. I will serve India and the Independence Movement to my fullest capacity, even at the risk of my life. In serving my country, I shall seek no personal advantage for myself. I will regard all Indians as my brothers and sisters, without distinction of religion, language and territory."

~~FREE~~ INDIA GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED

~~He~~ will faithfully and without hesitation obey and execute all orders and instructions given to me by the Provisional Azad Hind Government, and will carry out all just and lawful commands of my superior officers under whom I may be required to serve from time to time."

In the first week of November, Netaji went to Tokyo with his Military Staff to attend the Greater East Asia Assembly as a distinguished visitor from India and not as an Indian representative of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

Dr. Ba Maw, The Head of the Burma State, introduced Netaji to the Assembly in highly complimentary words. Netaji spoke for a few minutes, expressing the reciprocity between India and the Eastern nations. There were various other distinguished delegates, representing different nations, who spoke at this gathering of different nationalities.

The Japanese Premier, Tojo, spoke in favour of the East Asiatic co-prosperity group. Tojo placed the Andaman and Nicobar Islands under the jurisdiction of the Azad Hind Government. He said :

" Now that the foundation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has been solidified still further and the Indian patriots under the same Government are firmly determined to accomplish their steadfast aim," Tojo declared, " I take this occasion to declare that the Imperial Government of Japan is ready shortly to place the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of Indian territory, now under the occupation of the Imperial Japanese forces, under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind as the initial evidence of her readiness to help in India's struggle for freedom."

MY ADVENTURES WITH THE I. N. A.

Netaji was very highly praised by all. He was invited by different Governmental heads, and on his way back to Singapore Emperor Hirohito granted an interview to Netaji, which the Japs regarded as an act of special grace to a foreigner by their ruler.

Netaji had gone to Tokyo mainly to settle important Indian affairs with the top men of the Tokyo Government and to establish personal relationship with representative leaders of East Asia. In Tokyo, the Japanese generals were so greatly impressed by his personality and ability that two of the generals freely expressed their opinion to Col. Raju, Netaji's personal physician who was on Netaji's staff, that they wished they had a great leader and warrior-statesman like Subhas Chandra Bose.

Netaji went to Manchukuo and from there he went to China, where he met Wang Ching-wei, the Nanking Premier. Coming southward, he went to the Philippines and stayed there as the guest of the President. At an official dinner given in honour of Netaji, the Premier's son expressed his personal opinion that he wished that in place of his father Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was the head of the Philippine State.

Netaji travelled down to Java, where at a dinner with the Jap Commander-in-Chief he expressed his views that he did not see any reason why Java should not be given complete independence. The Japanese Commander replied that, if the Javanese had a leader like him (Netaji) to guide the destinies of her people, they would have freed her long ago.

After finishing his tour of the East Asiatic countries,



COY. BUKHAYEVOYIN REGIMENT
Near Bukhayevo, 1917.

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He came back to Singapore and concentrated his attention upon moving nearer to India's frontiers. The Indian National Army was only waiting for orders to move. When the P. G. A. H. asked the Japs for necessary transport they refused, saying that they were already short of troopships and that the few ships they had were required by them for carrying their own troops to different theatres of war.

The Thai railway has not, as yet, been completed. Netaji was placed in a very awkward position and had no choice except to order his troops to march, on foot, from Malaya to the distant frontiers of Burma.

Earlier, when arms were demanded for one lakh of I.N.A. soldiers, the Japs provided only for 40,000 and that grudgingly. They were always grumbling about a shortage of arms.

Col. Burhan-ud-Din had already reached Burma in 1943 with the soldiers of the Bahadur Group and now Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh, Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz and Lt.-Col. Malik's Regiments also moved on receipt of orders from their Supreme Commander. A few months later, the Thai-Burma railway was constructed and the civilian recruits and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment got the much needed railway transport.

Netaji, accompanied by Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir and Mr. Shahay, left for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to pay silent tribute to the dead heroes of Mother India. He saw the cells where hundreds of India's noblest sons had passed their whole lives and died, suffering tortures every day of their life.

In January 1944, Netaji, along with his Provisional Government of Azad Hind, moved to Burma. He set

up the P.G.A.H. headquarters in Rangoon. At the end of February, the whole of the First Division reached its destination in Burma.

The Azad Hind Government offices were established at Halpin Road, Rangoon, although later on they were moved to Tamway Road. The stage was now being set for the long-awaited offensive on India and, from the busy movements in the Government headquarters and in Army circles it seemed as if victory was a certainty, and in the next few months the I.N.A. would be liberating India from the British yoke.

Most of us believed our victory to be a foregone conclusion—merely a question of time. Everybody thought that the imperialists and their hirelings in India, who were fighting for an unjust and aggressive war, could not defeat the Indian National Army whose every soldier was convinced of the righteousness of the cause—he was thus fighting India's war of independence.

After the P. G. A. H. was shifted to Burma, the Burma Territorial Committee was dissolved and, in its stead, a Burma Branches Department was opened under the Azad Hind Sangh headquarters.

Prior to Netaji's arrival in East Asia, the Japanese had set up separate organisations of Indians to serve their own ulterior, imperialistic purposes. All these organisations were placed under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and their members were enrolled as soldiers in the I.N.A. or as members of the Azad Hind Sangh.

Organisations like the Usman Camp, the Amar Singh Sabotage Training School, Rangoon, and the wireless,

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Burma and Malaya were placed under the supervision of the Azad Hind Government. A training school was established in Pangoon under the command of Lt.-Col. Thimmayya and another school for training Bengalee youths in revolution-ary and sabotage work, was set up under the able and experienced leadership of Lt.-Col. Jiwan Singh.

Netaji studied Burmese politics for some time and, by his personal contacts with Dr. Ba Maw, tried to obtain transport and food facilities for the I.N.A. in Burma from the Burmese Government. Netaji paid half a million dollars as a token of India's friendship with Burma for the Burmese Soldiers' Welfare Fund and later, on Dr. Ba Maw's daughter's marriage, he paid a big sum as a wedding present to the Head of the Burmese Government.

CHAPTER VIII

The I.N.A. at the Front

To raise the prestige of the Azad Hind Government, Netaji left no stone unturned and, keeping his mind busy with Governmental work, he went ahead, surmounting one hurdle after another. In the last week of February, the Japanese Supreme Commander in Burma sent an official document, which laid down certain division of work in liberated territories as was temporarily agreed upon between Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Japanese Government.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind had, therefore, to take charge of all the affairs of the country. It was entrusted with the task of running the administration of the navy, air force, police, railways, telegraphs, telephones, etc. The Provisional Government was to consult the Japanese only in certain matters. It was very clearly laid down that, after the establishment of the permanent Government of the country, nothing, which was being decided upon on behalf of the Provisional Government, would be binding on the permanent Government. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind was sure that the Japanese would abide by this agreement.

In the beginning of 1944, All-India Radio, and its



COLONEL BURHAN-UD-DIN
"I'ven to-day behind the bars."

...ations were boasting of the big prepa-
made by the British for a large-scale offensive
especially bragging about launching a mighty
against Burma. Instead the I.N.A. and its
the Japanese, launched their offensive on a
blitzkrieg scale. Preparatory to the offensive, Netaji
made several speeches. In February, 1944, he said in
an address to the Army :

“ Soldiers of India ! There—there in the distance
—beyond the river ; beyond those jungles ; beyond those
hills, lies the promised land—the soil from which we
sprang, the land to which we will now return. Hark !
India is calling ! India’s metropolis, Delhi, is calling !
Three hundred and eighty-eight million of our country-
men are calling ! Blood is calling to blood. Get up !
We have no time to lose. Take up your arms !

“ There in front of you is the road that our
pioneers have built. We shall march along that road.
We shall carve our way through the enemy’s ranks, or,
if God wills, we shall die a martyr’s death. And in
our last steps we shall kiss the road that will bring our
army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to free-
dom. ‘ Chalo Delhi ! ’ ”

In another speech, Netaji said : “ The Azad Hind
Fauj has only one aim—the liberation of India. The
Provisional Government and the Army are servants of
the nation. So far as India is concerned, what is
important to all of us is the situation near India. Those
who really want liberty must fight for it and pay for it
with their blood.

“ The enemy has already drawn the sword. We
must fight him with the sword. The enemy is ruthless

and desperate and he is armed to the teeth. Against such a foe no amount of civil disobedience or sabotage or revolutionary terrorism can be of any avail. Therefore, we want to expel the British from India. We have to fight the enemy with his own weapons. The hour has struck and every Indian must advance towards the battlefield. When the blood of freedom-loving Indians begins to flow, India will attain her freedom."

In yet another speech, Netaji said: "I am sure the Japanese cannot double-cross us. They can only do that, if we do not organise properly, if we fail to raise an army of Indians to fight for our freedom. We shall have to be awake and alive—on our guard, not only against British Imperialism; against the imperialistically inclined Japanese bureaucrats, but also against many Indians in our own country."

By the end of January, some I.N.A. battalions had begun their march towards the Arakan front under the command of Lt.-Col. Misra and were, soon after, engaged in the bloodiest battles against the superior might of the enemy. Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, who reached Rangoon in January, had scarcely a few weeks' rest before he was commanded by Netaji to the front. Col. Shah Nawaz had Major Thakur Singh and Major Ram Swarup from the Bahadur Group as his second-in-command and Major Mahbub served as Adjutant.

The Japanese method of sabotaging the I.N.A. movement, though indirect, could not escape our notice and was provokingly obstructionist. Though the Japanese had recognised the P.G.A.H. and respected Netaji, they had not forgotten the lessons of diplomacy.

which they had learnt in the past 100 years of their contact with foreign imperialist Powers. In view of this, our chances of a successful revolution lay in our own efforts and how best we could checkmate the Japanese mysterious and hidden designs.

All the Indians in East Asia, who were fully awake to the requirements of this emergency, backed the leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, whole-heartedly. The Azad Hind Government was recognised by many neutral and many powerful nations and already had diplomatic relations with them through Mr. Nambiar, and other representatives in Europe.

As is natural with the theory of nationalism, each nation in the world wanted to be all-powerful. The Germans did not like to see the Japanese all-powerful in the East, which Netaji knew by keeping himself in touch with German diplomatic circles. But the P.G.A.H., having very poor means of communication with foreign Powers, had to rely mainly upon the help of the German Consulate in Thailand to send messages to foreign nations.

The Azad Hind Dal

Netaji was fully awake to the necessity of organising a strong and militant political party. Although the Indian Independence League functioned as a semi-political body, it did not fulfil the requirements of a revolutionary party. The League was composed of all types, young and old, Socialists, Communists, nationalists, careerists, etc. Many of its branch presidents had occupied the presidential *gaddis* through Japanese favouritism, by capturing the Japanese

imagination in the beginning of the war. These Indians, who were traitors to the cause, were not to be brought into India by Netaji.

Now, as the war of liberation had started, the Indian Independence League could no longer suit the requirements of this revolutionary struggle. 'It was all right in East Asia with its varied ideas and doubtful loyalty to the leader, Netaji,' but in India a more dynamic, disciplined, homogeneous, patriotic, energetic, politically-conscious organisation was required, which could be clear about the principles it was fighting for and should be, in every way, fit to occupy administrative key-positions in the permanent Government in India, in order to give effect to those principles.

With that end in view, the Azad Hind Dal was formed which would replace the Indian Independence League inside India.

Netaji, in his letter to the committee for the reorganisation of the Azad Hind Dal, clearly laid down that it was not merely a body of Government servants, but a political party of which the patriots, who already functioned as Government chiefs, must become members. It was a disciplined nationalist party and not a Fascist or a Communist organisation. Its object was not aggression against other countries but India's unification. It derived inspiration from the leader and functioned on the *leader's principle*. It included both Government and non-Government men, military personnel as well as civilians.

The formation of the Azad Hind Dal was one of the most important steps taken by Netaji to infuse a more

patriotic spirit in the Indians under him and thereby to achieve a successful revolution. Netaji had set views on revolution, which he carefully explained to the cadets in the Swaraj Young Men's Training Institute (S Y.T.I.), Rangoon.

"To have a successful revolution," he said, "we must have unified leadership. It may not be a single man's leadership, but the leadership of a political party which is clear as to the principles of revolution. With a political revolution we must have a social revolution, so that we may be saved from the tremendous work and unnecessary bloodshed which might have to be spilt in bringing about an economic and social revolution."

Since Netaji wrote his book, "Indian Struggle", in 1933, his views on Communism and Fascism had not undergone much change and he reiterated the view that "we should have a synthesis of both." He was all out for the interests of the poor and have-nots. Speaking of India, he said :

"Before the rich have luxuries, the poor must have at least the amenities of life."

Azad Hind Dal batches were allotted ranks and duties in the liberated territories by the Dal executive and it was desired that the Dal should expand a hundred-fold on Indian soil. The members were required to show a full sense of duty, responsibility and patriotism. All the members of the Azad Hind Dal owed allegiance to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The Azad Hind Dal had ranks, from Netaji at the top to Sewak at the bottom.

In the beginning, the organisation was not favourably looked upon by some of the senior military

officers of the I.N.A., who possibly did not understand its need nor its significance, and they secretly tried to sabotage it by spreading all sorts of unfounded rumours, saying that the members of the Azad Hind Dal were aspiring to become governors and deputy governors in the liberated zones of India. But when they saw the patriotic zeal and fervour of the Azad Hind Dal officers and men, they completely changed their opinion.

After selecting the members of the Azad Hind Dal, Netaji, in a short speech delivered by him on March 4, 1944, explained the objects of the Dal and nominated Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir as the leader of the party. Mr. Sahay, a Minister of the Government, was selected to be the deputy leader. I worked as Secretary to the Dal.

On March 8, the first party of the Azad Hind Dal left Rangoon for the front line. The Azad Hind Dal was intended for administrative and revolutionary work inside India. After the retreat in 1944, its members functioned as officers of the Sangh and the Azad Hind Government.

The Battle Fronts

Returning to the war and the heroic deeds of our soldiers on the Indo-Burma frontier, let us start with the Arakan sector where Lt.-Col. Misra, Commandant of the Bahadur Group, had launched a speedy offensive. Major Mehar Das served as his Second-in-Command. In a special Order of the Day, issued by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Commander-in-Chief, Azad Hind Fauj, the battle of Arakan was eulogistically mentioned.

The order reads: "The eyes of the whole world are focussed on the Arakan front, where events of far-

Reaching consequences are taking place to day. The glorious and brilliant actions of the brave units of the Azad Hind Fauj, working in close concert with the forces of the Imperial Nippon Army, have helped to foil all attempts by the Anglo-American forces to start a counter-offensive in this sector.

"I am sure that the brave deeds of our comrades on the Arakan front will be a great inspiration to all officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj, wherever they may be stationed at the present moment.

"Our long-awaited march to Delhi has begun and with grim determination we shall continue that march until the tricolour national flag, that is flying over the Arakan mountain, is hoisted over the Viceroy's House and until we hold our victory parade in the ancient Red Fort of Delhi.

"Comrades, officers and men of the India's Army of Liberation! Let there be one solemn resolve in your hearts: —'liberty or death'! And let there be but one slogan on your lips—'Onward to Delhi'. The road to Delhi is the road to freedom. Victory will certainly be ours."

The Arakan armies fought so bravely that the enemy was forced to leave the Buthidaung area and erect defences near Chittagaong. Lt.-Col. Misra and Major Mehar Das were decorated with the Sardar-i-Jang for outstanding bravery in Arakan battles. Lt. Pyare Singh, a platoon commander under Col. Misra, received the 'Veer-i-Hind'. Lt. Pyare Singh lost one leg and received bullet wounds in his other leg.

Honouring the brave Lieutenant before a full I.N.A. parade and in the presence of all the Ministers

of the Burma Government, Netaji said : "By honouring Lt. Pyare Singh with the medal, I feel myself honoured and not only myself, but the Azad Hind Government is also honoured by it."

Sub Officer Hakim Ali fought against 30 of the enemy with only seven soldiers under his command and killed most of the enemy in combat. Hakim Ali was awarded the Tamgha-i-Bahaduri and the Shatru Nash Medals.

Excellent reports reached Government Headquarters of the bravery and the fighting spirit of I.N.A.

LIST OF DECORATIONS A. H. F. PERSONNEL

335. The following will be the order of precedence for Decorations awarded to members of the Azad Hind Fauj by the Provisional Government of Azad Hind :-

1. Shabeed-e-Bharat.
2. Sher-e-Hind.
3. Sardar-e-Jang.
4. Vir-e-Hind.
5. Tamgha-e-Bahaduri.
6. Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash.

II In future there will be two classes of the 'Sardar-e-Jang' Medal according to the standard of individual bravery, devotion to duty and leadership exhibited in the field.

The awards of 'Sardar-e-Jang' medal made up till now will be of Class I of that medal.

III Members of the Azad Hind, who render meritorious and commendable service in the field, but fall short of qualifying for a decoration, will be granted the certificate 'Sanad-e-Bahaduri, by the Head of the State Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

The award of Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash is of the following classes :—

Class II : To be awarded to those members of the Azad Hind Fauj who kill or capture alive any British or American Officer or other rank either in single combat or in a group fight where qualities of individual initiative and individual bravery come into play

Class I : To be awarded to those members of the Azad Hind



"I am not honouring Lt. Pyare Singh. He honours India."

• Netaji presenting the Veer-e-Hind Medal.

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soldiers in the Arakan Sector. The Japanese Commanders were so surprised by the fighting qualities of the I.N.A. regiment in this sector that their Arakan Commander sent a message of congratulations to Netaji.

For the year, that Col. Misra remained on the Arakan front, the Allied armies could not cross Buthidaung. The Buthidaung Sector became known as the *Misra Line*. All honour to the hero who fought and eventually attained martyrdom in this second war for India's independence.

Raturi Meets West Africans

Major P. S. Raturi, a young Gharwali officer who fought under Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz in the Kaladan Sector, was renowned for his military ability and tactical

Fauj who exhibit conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in killing or capturing alive any British or American Officer or other rank either in single combat or in a group fighting where qualities of individual initiative and individual bravery come into play.

PRECEDENCE, ETC.

The medal 'Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash' shall take precedence after 'Tamgha-e-Bahaduri'. This medal may be awarded to a member of the Azad Hind Fauj in addition to any other decoration for which he may have qualified.

Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash may also be awarded posthumously.

The Provisional Government of Azad Hind has decided that the Medal 'Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash' may be awarded to any person other than a member of the Azad Hind Fauj, whether outside India or inside, who, while participating in or helping the war of India's Liberation, qualifies himself for the decoration by fulfilling the conditions laid down above.

This medal may also be awarded to any person outside India or inside—who helps the prosecution of India's War of Liberation by killing or capturing alive any British or American other than Army Personnel, who is clearly an enemy in the path of India's freedom.

efficiency. He drove the enemy 60 miles inside India. The fight in Kaladan took place against the 71 West African Division, whom the I.N.A. defeated in every battle in the Kaladan Sector.

The tricolour flag flew on the soil of India and India's national songs sung by the disciplined soldiers of the I.N.A. were giving a new life and spirit to the jungle air. The Japanese looked with awe and respect at the young major and his army. For the first time in the history of the Japanese army, their soldiers fought under an Indian commander, Major Raturi. Major Raturi was awarded the Sardar-e-Jang for his brave deeds. He functioned in the same capacity as a battalion commander of the Allied army.

Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz, Commander of the Bose Regiment formed in 1943 from among the best soldiers of the I.N.A. left for the front in the first week of February, 1944. His regiment started from Malay Taiping to Burma on 21st November. Covering hundreds of miles, he reached Burma in the first week of January. Before his departure, Netaji in a moving speech to the soldiers of the I.N.A. said :

"I cannot give you sufficient equipment nor the latest weapons, but, with all these difficulties, I have faith in you and your Commander. As you are the first army to go to the main front, you have to give an everlasting name to your regiment and the I.N.A. The eyes of all are fixed on you. My blessings be with you ! "

The Bose Brigade, burning with enthusiasm and a glorious fighting spirit, left for the front. It covered 30 to 35 miles a day with a heavy kit of 80 lbs. on each soldier's back. According to the Bose Brigade regiment-

THE I.N.A. AT THE FRONT

al history, where 10 of the I.N.A. met 100 of the enemy; the enemy fled, leaving their ammunition and other things behind. And when the I.N.A. soldiers shouted at the running enemy and asked the soldiers to fight, there was no reply.

In the winter in Haka and Falam, many of our soldiers died of the cold because they had no warm clothes to wear. Our soldiers had no raincoats, no mosquito-nets, and even the kit which they were given was wearing out and there was no chance of getting any more supplies except by attacking the enemy supply depots.

For securing rations, our soldiers had to tramp 50 miles into the hills and bring the ration on their backs. Many of these soldiers had again to be engaged in battles against the enemy. There were no regular transport arrangements. So the chances of rations coming from the base were very slim. Very scanty medical aid could be given to the soldiers and that too was soon stopped as stores were rapidly running out. Base hospitals had large stores of medicines. But again the question was how to bring those medicines to the front line as there were no transport arrangements.

Soldiers from Haka and Falam were sent to Indanggi and Kalewa hospitals, which were at a distance of about 100 miles from the Haka-Falam sector.

This sector was solely defended by the I.N.A. Certain haughty Japs refused to salute their seniors in the I.N.A., as was required of them according to the Joint Army Order. The I.N.A. officers, naturally, felt slighted and started immediate disciplinary action

against such conceited Jap soldiers. It was usual for the Subhas Brigade officers to mete out humiliating punishments, like slapping and caning, to the Jap soldiers. The Japs had to bear it. Even junior officers in the Subhas Brigade followed the example of their senior officers and made a point getting salutes from the Japanese, or, in case of refusal, to slap them.

This was thought to be unreasonable by the Bose Brigade Commander, who had to issue a strict regimental order, which read something like this : "It has been brought to the notice of the Commander that certain soldiers have started beating the Japs out of sheer fun. This must stop."

The Bose Brigade threw itself selflessly into this hard and arduous life of fighting, which lasted for over three months. At last the order for movement came in May, when Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz, Major Mehboob and Major Ram Swarup left with their company for the Kohima front and the rest of the Bose Brigade was ordered to follow them, which they did accordingly, carrying their arms and ammunition along with their sick in bullock-carts. Those among the sick who were ordered to join hospital at Kalewa pleaded to the Commander for a chance to participate in the battles which were soon to be fought in the Kohima sector.

This part of the Naga district is hilly and is unsuitable for the use of tanks and armoured cars. There is not even a landing place for planes. Modern warfare is absolutely impossible. The commanders knew that Sylhet, Mymensingh and Dacca were not far from Dima-pur and Kohima and, once the battles of Kohima were won, advance into the plains of Bengal would become

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easy. This Bose Brigade soldiers were happy as they were going to participate in the battles, on the evening of which depended India's future destiny.

Captain Ajmer Singh (the brave commander who tiring of the humiliating treatment meted out to him, shot himself later in the Red Fort) and Lt. Mohammad Hassan were already fighting in the Kohima sector. 2nd Lt. Lewis, who participated in this sector, was awarded the Shatru Nash for a single-handed fight against seven of the enemy, killing two and bringing two more in as prisoners of war. A Sikh soldier of the Bahadur Group was awarded the Shaheed-e-Bharat.

While Kohima was captured, the situation in other sectors was becoming dangerous for the I.N.A. An all-round withdrawal order was issued by the I.N.A. and the Japanese Supreme Commander. The order was very upsetting to the I.N.A. soldiers. Officers said : " India lies ahead of us. Freedom lies ahead of us. Behind us are the fetters we have broken. The enemy also is in front of us. What then is this order ? After our liberating over a 100 kilometers of our own territory, must we relinquish it again to those from whom it has been won with blood ? "

Lieut.-Col. Shah Nawaz refused the Japanese commander's orders. Then Netaji's order for withdrawal was shown to him, which he knew he could not disobey. The Japanese general, with tears in his eyes, said : " Withdrawal will be only a temporary measure; we will soon be attacking Imphal again." The Japanese officers pleaded with the Bose Brigade Commander to refrain from such a suicidal decision. Ultimately, the officers, with heavy hearts, agreed to take the counsel of the Japanese.

Every one of these officers wanted to fight and die, but the orders were to live for another offensive. Now the soldiers had to be informed about these orders. None in the regiment was bold enough to read out the orders to them. Col. Shah Nawaz collected the whole regiment and, overcome with emotion, read out the order. The soldiers refused to believe it; they took it to be a false order forged with the name of „Netaji. They wanted to fight and die rather than go back.

After two days of reasoning and persuasion, the Bose Brigade finally left the liberated territory. The unwilling soldiers, drained of physical energy, hungry and tired, started the withdrawal—this time, not with the hope and ambition of freeing India, but of leaving freed India behind them. Along with the soldiers of the Subhas Brigade, there were thousands of others of the I.N.A., who too were withdrawing. The question would be asked, ‘ Who were these other I.N.A. soldiers ? ’

The No. 1 Division, which fought on the Imphal front, consisted of four regiments, namely, Gandhi, Azad, Nehru and Bose. A brief account of the Bose Regiment has already been given above. Let us then take the Azad guerillas, who were under the command of Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh and were despatched to the front in the last days of April.

Throughout the Imphal operations, Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh and his men were engaged in day-to-day fighting and performed great feats of bravery, for which many of the officers and Jawans were awarded the Azad Hind Medal. Captain Ranpat Singh, who commanded a platoon, was awarded the Vir-e-Hind for exceptional bravery in charging the enemy and capturing a hill.

LION-HEARTED COMMANDERS OF IMPHAL



COL. INAYAT KIANI COLONEL GULZARA SINGH GENERAL MOHAMMAD ZAMAN KIANI
Divisional Commander

THE I.N.A. AT THE FRONT

Captain Shangara Singh of the Azad Regiment was also awarded the Vir-e-Hind.

In the Imphal sector near Bogli, nine of our men fought back 100 of the enemy, who attacked from different directions. They withstood the enemy attack for one full day when reinforcements were received by the I.N.A., and the enemy soldiers retreated. Of these nine, five were wounded and two killed. One man upheld the honour of the regiment. Naik Des Raj was recommended for the Sher-e-Hind medal.

In the third week of March, Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh and his army crossed the Burma border and set their feet on the soil of India. After capturing Moreh and the Pallel Hills, the I.N.A. headquarters was set up at Chamol under Col. Zaman Kiani, the Divisional Commander of the No. 1 Division.

Pallel Aerodrome Battle.

On May 2, 1944, a large-scale offensive under Lt.-Col. Kiani, was launched by the Gandhi guerillas to capture the Pallel aerodrome. This regiment was already stationed in the Imphal sector. The I.N.A. wanted to occupy this strategically important aerodrome before the Japs could get near it. The I.N.A. had to hurry the attack.

The soldiers, who already had had nothing to eat for three days, were given two *chapatis* before launching out on this momentous campaign in the late hours of the night. The I.N.A. had to blow up a very important bridge in order completely to cut off the enemy retreat. After the demolition of the bridge, the enemy would have been left with the option either surrendering or

fighting to the last man. A large number of Indian forces were thus expected as prisoners of war and a big store of arms and ammunition were expected to fall as a prize in this victory.

Shouting revolutionary slogans, our soldiers penetrated the enemy lines. They had left the enemy pickets 40 miles behind when they met with a fusillade from the enemy. The Gandhi guerillas did not fire a single shot in reply. The enemy mistook this for an attempt by the I.N.A. completely to encircle them. The Gurkhas, who were by now utterly demoralised, shouted from the other side that they were Indians and were willing to surrender to the I.N.A. The enemy hoisted the white flag.

Our soldiers, who were one half of the enemy's strength, were greatly encouraged by this easy walk-over and the I.N.A. commanders went forward to contact the enemy commanders.

Lt. Lal Singh, Capt. Kapur Singh and Sepoy Jhanda went in one picket and Capt. Sadhu Singh alone went in another picket. Jhanda and Lal Singh were armed only with daggers; the other two officers had pistols with them.

In the course of conversation, Lt. Lal Singh enquired of the Gurkha Subedar as to how many Britishers there were in the picketing shouting that his dagger was feeling thirsty for the Englishman's blood. Just then, an English officer came out, whom Lal Singh killed without any talk or hesitation. Another Britisher came whom Lal Singh killed too. In the meantime, the enemy pounced upon Lal Singh, killing him on the spot.

THE I.N.A. AT THE FRONT

Jhanda was infuriated and killed four more of the enemy. Captain Kapur Singh killed another two in the hand-to-hand scuffle that ensued. Lt. Lal Singh and Captain Kapur Singh were killed by the enemy soldiers and Jhanda came back to relate the whole story at the I.N.A. regimental headquarters.

In the other picket where Captain Sadhu Singh had gone to negotiate with the surrendering enemy, he was fixed on and hit. Wounded he rolled down the hill. His soldiers, seeing him bloodstained, were enraged and wanted to avenge themselves

The enemy started machine-gun at the I.N.A. soldiers, who were chatting leisurely below the hill. Eventually, the bridge could not be blown up and the I.N.A. had to fight a defensive battle. Two of our officers were killed and 13 other ranks were wounded. Thoroughly tired out though the I.N.A. soldiers were, they cried out for vengeance and refused to fall back when ordered to do so.

The news reached the Regimental Commander Lt - Col. Inayat Kiani, at headquarters, which was only four miles from the scene of battle. Lt.-Col. Inayat started out with 250 soldiers to reinforce his men fighting on the front line. He had arranged to contact them on the fourth morning, but unfortunately he was attacked on the way by two companies of the enemy infantry. Instead of helping his forces, he was himself involved in a defensive battle.

It was raining heavily when the enemy started their attack. The I.N.A. was very poorly equipped, whereas the enemy attacked with 20 field guns and their fire was coming straight on the I.N.A. lines with

deadly accuracy. In the bitterly cold regions of the Pallel Hills, the I.N.A. men had no warm clothes, no raincoats and only a negligible store of medicines. The soldiers' boots were completely worn out in these four months of mountain warfare and the long dreary route marches they had to undergo.

Fifteen bombers attacked our forces, throwing grenades and small bombs and sometimes machine-gunning our soldiers whenever they discovered our positions. The I.N.A. casualties lay dying in the jungle and could not be removed as long as the battle was in progress. Many of our brave soldiers died, praying for success.

When the battle was over, casualties were given whatever medical aid was available and the dead warriors were given a battlefield burial. The enemy forces increased in numbers and Col. Inayat was forced to make a strategic withdrawal to the I.N.A. defences at Khanjol.

Khanjol Hill Battle

In the middle of May, one British brigade attacked the Khanjol Hill which was defended by 55 Jawans of the I.N.A. This hill was of major importance to both sides. The I.N.A. platoon, commanded by Lieut. Ajaib Singh, fought bravely through the tense and exciting hours of this hill battle.

The enemy attacked the hill, supported by 10 field guns aided by mortar and machine-gun companies. Fortunately for the I.N.A. the enemy forces were mainly British. I.N.A. Jawans had already decided to wreak vengeance and were ready to meet the enemy at the earliest hour.

THE I.N.A. AT THE FRONT

The enemy came, climbed the hill making a terrible noise, and shouting at our men through loud-speakers. But the I.N.A. soldiers kept quiet waiting their chance. The I.N.A. commander gave orders to the soldiers to be alert and in proper position for a counter attack on the enemy. The enemy came very close and then our soldiers took out the pins from their bombs and threw them at the swiftly advancing enemy.

The attack from our side was so sudden that the enemy was taken aback and left their dead and wounded, and the majority, panic-stricken as they were, started running helter-skelter. The attack which started at 7-30 a.m., ended at 4 a.m. on the next day. The superior forces of the enemy refused to accept defeat and attacked our hill positions five times in 20 hours, but were forced every time to withdraw with a sorely beaten heart.

At least 400 of the enemy were killed or wounded in this hill battle. The I.N.A. casualties were nominal. The full account of this battle was sent to headquarters, where the soldiers joyously celebrated the great victory by drinking to the health of the I.N.A. warriors.

The reader may wonder where the starving soldiers of the Gandhi Guerillas got drinks. It was "Churchill's supply" as the soldiers called it—the looted booty of the hill battle. There are numerous instances of the bravery of the I.N.A. soldiers in this unique attack. Many of the soldiers, who fought in this battle, received the Shatru Nash for having killed numbers of enemy soldiers.

In the Khanjol Hill battle, the story of Sepoy Kehar Singh needs special mention. When Sepoy

Kehar Singh saw a Bren-gunner fatally wounded and the enemy running to capture the Bren-gun, he rushed in under heavy fire from the enemy camp. Two Tommies were about 10 yards from the Bren-gun position and were about to capture it, when Kehar Singh, losing no time, took the heavy weapon and fired at the enemy, killing both the Tommies on the spot. Hundreds of the enemy were climbing up the hill but Kehar Singh continued firing at the enemy soldiers advancing towards him. Many of our men helped him by throwing hand-grenades at the enemy position. All the time Kehar Singh showed complete disregard for his life.

The enemy lost 200 dead, almost all being British officers and soldiers. On our side, one platoon commander was wounded and a few other ranks received bullet wounds. Lt. Ajaib Singh too was wounded, but he participated in three more battles which followed soon. Lt. Ajaib Singh was decorated with the Sardar-e-Jang and Sepoy Kehar Singh received the Sher-e-Hind (the Lion of India).

Period of Lull

After the battles of Pallel Aerodrome and Khanjoh Hill, the enemy sought full knowledge of our position in order to avoid a repetition of the previous shambles. I.N.A. Jawans, who were fighting continuously for over a month, now got the chance to have some rest in this period of lull when only patrol activities continued on both sides.

The I.N.A. had captured some useful weapons during these battles and many of our soldiers, who had

no arms, were supplied with the hand grenades and rifles captured from the enemy. The weapons captured in the Khanjoh Hill battle were 70 rifles, four Bren-guns, one trench mortar and about 1,100 hand grenades, not to mention particularly the large quantity of cigarettes, tea, biscuits, whisky and milk tins which our soldiers looted from the enemy supply. All this stuff was consumed in no time by our hungry soldiers.

In these days of lull the enemy dropped leaflets over our lines, mentioning the names of our regimental and other commanders and imploring our men to cross over to the British side. Good treatment was promised to those who would desert the I. N. A. and join their old British Indian Regiments. The pamphlets, written in emotional language, wanted to create the same impression which the British successfully made on the Germans in the First Great War—the impression of home-sickness.

Most of the pamphlets read: “Soldiers of India, your families are worried about you, your children are crying and praying for the day when you will be back home. Why not avail yourselves of this opportunity and join our side? You will get your arrears of pay and three months’ leave with pay and will be sent to your homes by aeroplanes.”

Lt-Col. Inayat Kiani sent hand-written pamphlets in reply, refusing the enemy’s offer on behalf of the I.N.A. soldiers, and telling the British that the I.N.A. soldier, hungry though he was, preferred his life of freedom to the British biscuits and other luxuries. As regards meeting the families, Col. Kiani wrote: “We are confident to meet them soon enough when we

will go to India as victorious soldiers after defeating the forces of tyranny."

When the enemy found propaganda-pamphlets had no effect on the I. N. A. they thought of launching a large-scale offensive. The lull was over, and now came the storm.

Battles of Mittong Khunu

With propaganda weapons of loud-speakers (and heavy artillery effectively to aid the propaganda in case it was unsuccessful in lowering the I.N.A. morale !) the enemy launched a large-scale offensive. The loud-speakers repeatedly disturbed the calmness of the jungle air by threatening the I.N.A. "either surrender, or else get ready to face death in the hilly area of Imphal." The loud-speakers shouted : "Gandhi Guerillas, beware! We are attacking with big topkhana and with the superiority of arms and ammunition. If you want safety, lay down your arms in half an hour's time. Now 20 minutes are left Only 10 minutes are now between your life and death."

Addressing the commander, the loud-speaker shouted : "Listen well, Commander Kiani, we will completely blow up your weak defences. We pity you and your regiment." And so on and so forth. But not a single I.N.A. soldier paid serious attention to these silly threats.

The magnanimity of the British was seemingly overflowing for the I.N.A.! Another one hour was given to our army commander to reconsider his decision regarding surrender. But the determined soldiers of

the I.N.A. took defensive position up and were made themselves ready to meet the enemy attack.

A few of our men were so greatly agitated that they entered the enemy lines and, killing a large number of the enemy, themselves got killed on the battlefield. Lt. Mohan Singh entered the enemy lines with a revolver in his hand. After killing many with his revolver, he gave his life in a manner befitting an I.N.A. soldier.

The attack was launched by the enemy at 8. a.m. The Gandhi Guerillas were only one company in strength fighting against a full enemy brigade. These 200 were all non-martial estate labourers from Malaya, or sons of rikshaw coolies from Burma. The South Indian Tamil and Telugu boys, now fighting in the front line, had been trained like any other combatants of the I.N.A. The I.N.A. Regimental Commander, Lt.-Col. Inayat Kiani, who had been a soldier for 15 years, found it would be a most unequal battle and so ordered the front-liners to withdraw and fall back on the reserve, as no ammunition could be sent to the firing line because of heavy enemy fire. The enemy was using trench mortars, heavy guns and light machine-guns and all the latest weapons of modern warfare.

Lt-Col. Kiani's orders fell like a bomb-shell on the I. N. A. soldiers. The vanguard of our soldiery refused to obey the order. Each of those soldiers preferred death to withdrawal. Not a single inch of the liberated territory was to be given back to the enemy, they said. When the platoon commandant, Mansukh Raj, tried to convince them of the futility of fighting all turned towards him and said; "Chhab Dilli idhar, Peechhe Singapore, Dilli Jai Ga Chhab' Netajee bola."

The enemy fire was on and the platoon commander, Lt. Mansukh, was wounded. Now the wounded commander, too, refused to return. He agreed to the soldiers' request of personally leading them to glorious victory or to a martyr's death. Lt-Col. Inayat Kiani was extremely worried about the fate of his men, but the platoon under Lt. Mansukh charged with fixed bayonets, was shouting the revolutionary slogans: "Challo Dilli," "Inquilab Zindabad" and "Netaji Ki Jai."

The Gandhi Guerillas killed 200 of the enemy and wounded many more. The enemy began to retreat. Only five of our soldiers were saved from the clutches of death; all the rest died fighting. When the soldiers saw that the enemy had withdrawn to their former position, they too came back with their severely wounded commandant, Lt. Mansukh Raj.

Before launching another large-scale offensive, the enemy was anxious to know the I N.A. positions. An A. V. force man had secret knowledge of the exact location of the Regimental Commandant's camp. The enemy launched a large-scale offensive with three battalions in order completely to annihilate the Gandhi Guerillas.

Early in the morning when the enemy was making final preparations for a hurried offensive, Lt-Col. Kiani luckily saw enemy forces moving over the hilltop only 150 yards away from him. One of his platoon commanders, Lt. Mansukh, had just come to him for daily instructions. The commander pointed out to him the enemy's soldiers, saying: "That is the order for you, Mansukh."

Mansukh, who had one of his wounded arms in a sling and had one of his boots in his hand, ran to collect his company for launching a surprise attack. The Regimental Commander had calculated that, if the I. N. A. captured the hill occupied by the enemy, it would save his whole regiment. To save the lives of 1,700, the Regimental Commander was ready to sacrifice 300 of his men in this surprise attack. The weather was unusually bitter and the I. N. A. soldiers had no warm clothes to protect them from the biting cold.

The enemy had the advantage over the I.N.A. as their defences this time were at the top of the hill. The I. N. A. soldiers climbed the hill to attack the superior forces of their opponents and reached near the enemy positions. The order for the charge was given, and the I.N.A. Jawans pounced upon the enemy like hungry wolves.

Lt. Mansukh, who was in the front line, received serious bullet wounds in his chest, thigh, arm and right hand. He fell, but rose again and again he fell. Though he was completely exhausted, he rose once again to lead his men to victory. The revolutionary slogans, the heroic spirit and the determination of our soldiers stood them in good stead. Brave Mansukh captured the hill and waved his hand cheerfully to his Commander, who was watching the battle. The Gandhi Guerillas were saved due to the dare-devil spirit of Mansukh, the brave I.N.A. lieutenant.

Lt. Ajaib Singh was immediately sent to relieve the seriously wounded Mansukh. The first thing Ajaib Singh

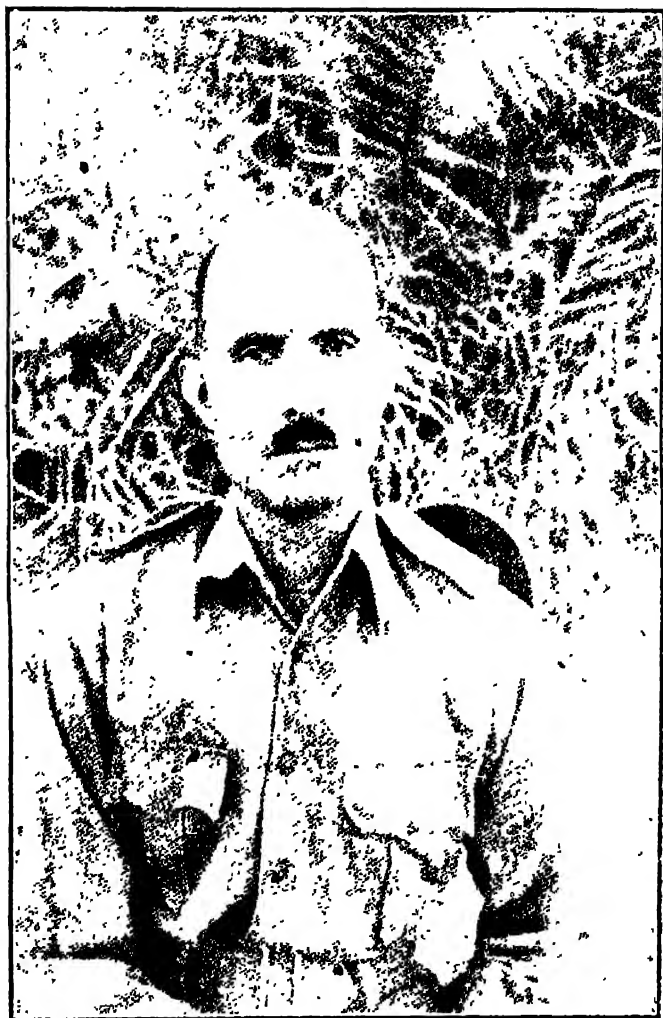
did was to stop the enemy observation post functioning by killing the English major, who was in charge of the O. P. He also killed two British captains who were handling the O. P. Now the enemy artillery was functioning blindly. At the observation post there was the silence of death. The enemy killed 200 of their own men by wrongly concentrating fire on their own lines.

The attack, which started at 7-30 a.m. the previous day, was over with an I.N.A. victory at 4 a.m. the following day. Seventeen British officers were killed and 800 of their men were either killed or wounded. On the I. N. A. side, four officers were killed and 150 other ranks killed or wounded.

The Gandhi Guerillas, who were engaged in four major battles against the enemy and who had fought bravely, had to withdraw on orders received from Netaji. Most of our officers and men were dying like flies through hunger, diarrhoea and dysentery. The I.N.A. soldiers developed all sorts of stomach diseases due to living on jungle grass and cinnamon tea, which was the only drink available.

Before the second battle of Mittong Khunu, the I. N. A. soldiers could not even eat grass, as it was feared that the change of positions caused thereby might act as a clue to the enemy. All through the operations the tired, hungry, sick and wounded I. N. A. soldiers' morale remained unshaken so much so that whenever our boys contacted the enemy positions it was the enemy who was forced to withdraw.

The Gandhi Guerillas started withdrawing on July 18, 1944. By the time they reached Mandalay, out of 94 officers, only 17 were still alive, and out of 3,000



COLONEL MALIK
Mastermind of the Secret Service

other ranks, only about 250 Jawans had managed to survive, all being in shattered health. The rest perished either fighting for the noble cause or suffered from diseases, which they had developed on the battlefield.

Many officers and other ranks were recommended for the Shatru Nash. Seven of our officers and men received the highest medals of bravery, the Sardar-e-Jang and the Sher-e-Hind. These were Major Pritam Singh, Sardar-e-Jang ; Lt. Ajaib Singh, Sardar-e-Jang (Class II) ; Lt. Taj Mohd. Sardar-e-Jang (Class II) ; Sepoy Kehar Singh, Sher-e-Hind ; Lt. Mansukh, Sardar-e-Jang ; Captain Sadhu Singh Vir-e-Hind ; Capt. Ramo Ji Rao, Sardar-e-Jang, and Lt. Lal Singh, Sardar-e-Jang.

Col. Malik and the Bishanpur Sector

Lt-Col. Malik was fighting in the Bishanpur sector. His reports to Netaji were extremely hopeful about the situation on the front. Men of the Indian Army in the Bishanpur area were deserting their British Indian Army units and were coming over to join the I.N.A. With the exception of a few of them, the rest were all sent back by Col. Malik, as there were no rations with the I.N.A. to feed them. They were asked to go back to their units, do propaganda to raise the ranks of the rebels in the Indian Army and to come over to the I.N.A. side after the fall of Imphal.

The flag of Independent India was flying for the first time on the Naga and Manipur hills and the India's Army of Liberation was standing on its own soil. The local population was coming to the Indian commanders, with fruits and milk to pay their respects to the chiefs

of the Free India Government. They gave their fullest co-operation to the I.N.A. Lt. Hari Singh, who was working under Col. Malik, was awarded the Sher-e-Hind for his exceptional bravery in blowing up a bridge and leading a platoon of the I.N.A. against three companies of the enemy.

There are many stories of justice done by the Indian commanders on the Imphal front. Col. Inayat Kiani, like Col. Malik, was approached by the border Kuki tribe and requested to decide their land disputes. Many cases of land litigation were decided by Col. Inayat Kiani and the judgments were gladly accepted by the litigants.

Pretty, English-speaking Kuki girls were forced by the British military authorities to work as spies for them against the I.N.A. But these girls occasionally approached our commanders with all the British military secrets.

The local population on the borders of India wholeheartedly welcomed and helped the I.N.A. At times when our men on patrol were entrapped by the enemy, the civilians gave them refuge in their houses even at the risk of their own lives. The I.N.A. had nothing material to give to these brave civilians except a word of thanks, wishing them 'Jai Hind.' But the patriotic Indians always said: "We are not helping the I.N.A. to receive any favour or charity in return. We only wanted the freedom of our country in return for our services." The I.N.A. received letters on behalf of some underground revolutionary parties, who welcomed them and promised all-out aid after the fall of Imphal.

In the Bishanpur sector where Col. Malik's armies were advancing on Imphal the I.N.A. was about 10 miles from Imphal. Col. Inayat Kiani was, at that time, chasing the retreating Allied army at a distance of only five miles from Imphal. Col. Shah Nawaz and his army had penetrated 100 miles into India. Kohima was once captured and then lost to the enemy. The strategically important Assam-Bengal Railway was about to be cut off.

In a special communique issued by His Excellency Netaji in Rangoon, Col. A. C. Chatterjee was appointed Governor of the liberated territory. Through an official declaration, the happy news of the I.N.A.'s victories were made known to the public. The Azad Hind Government headquarters was shifted from Rangoon to Maymyo, where Governor A. C. Chatterjee and His Excellency Netaji were staying with their respective staff.

The Rani of Jhansi Regiment and the Azad Hind Dal personnel waited with the rest of the Governmental staff at Maymyo. Advance guards of this staff, comprising about 200 men, had already been despatched to the liberated zone to help the I.N.A. in their administrative work. On March 19, the British forces had left the Chindwin and, after giving a two-day battle in Tammu and Moreh, had fallen back in the hills of Pallel and Imphal. Chamol and Pallel were captured by the I.N.A. Dimapur, Kohima, Bishanpur and many other small villages of strategic importance had fallen in our hands and now the operations centred on Imphal.

It was open talk in Burma that, after the fall of

Imphal, the British would fall back to their defences on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra. The fall of Imphal had to be hurried through before the monsoon broke. A speedy victory must be won at any cost. Everybody expected to reach Calcutta by December, 1944. The Christians in the I.N.A. talked of celebrating Christmas in Calcutta.

The Japs had already given an assurance to Netaji that Imphal would be taken by the end of March. The I.N.A., they said, need not carry much rations as all supplies, including clothes, food, medicines ammunition etc. would be available in Imphal in plenty.

According to the offensive plan, the British were to be given no time to "scorch" the Imphal supplies before their retreat and our commanders calculated that thousands of the enemy forces would be encircled and taken prisoner in the Imphal sector. Plans made were to receive the enemy prisoners. A large number of Indian soldiers were to be enlisted in the I. N. A. if they so wished, after they had fallen into our hands at Imphal. Even the sick in hospitals, who were waiting for major operations, talked of getting operated in Calcutta after its fall and they gladly waited for it.

Young I.N.A. commanders were victoriously marching forward and had completely encircled the famous town of Imphal. The Raja of Imphal had fled and a number of Manipuri Brahmins had come over to our side. The British divisions at Imphal were about to flee and were only waiting for the orders of retreat from their commanders. Our soldiers, stationed on a high hill near Imphal, were getting full reports of the utter confusion within the enemy lines.

When Imphal was crumbling before the mighty onslaught of the I.N.A, a state bank was opened in Rangoon to solve the currency problem in liberated zones. The bank had four directors under the chairmanship of the Finance Minister, Mr. Raghavan. Its branches were opened at Kamayut and Thingyungin. In October, 1944, a new branch of the bank was set up in Taungyi.

The Burma Government, which in the beginning showed some reluctance in giving permission for the opening of a state bank, finally allowed a limited bank to be opened through the efforts of the late Mr. Yellappa, Minister of the P. G. A. H., who later died in Taungyi while on active duty.

The Azad Hind Bank had much more money than the Burma State Bank. On the very day of its opening, about 600 accounts were opened by rich merchants and financiers of Burma and the deposits amounted to over Rs. 30 lakhs. The Government now found a regular source of income through taxes realised from its Indian subjects.

Lull and Preparation

The I.N.A. Falls Back

Just when the war situation was most hopeful for the I.N.A., the monsoon, which had already broken in April, was by June falling in torrents. The wheel of fate turned against us and, rather than cutting off the enemy's retreat and capturing Imphal, our troops were strategically forced to give up gained ground. Lt-Col. Habib was sent to the front to review the situation. I accompanied him on an inspection of the Government staff that was then stationed in Kaleiva and other neighbouring territories.

The enemy who had practically finished all preparations for a retreat, was ordered by the Allied Supreme Commander, Mountbatten to hold out for another week. In the meantime, reinforcements were rushed to the enemy, dropped by parachutes over the Imphal sector. The supply of new American bombers and fighters came in hundreds to the Burma front and helped the land forces. On our side, there was only one heavy gun, no planes and no hope of any reinforcement.

The British had placed over a dozen heavy guns on different hills, which fired day and night on our troops. Earlier when the British wanted to retreat

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from Imphal, we had cut all their lines of retreat, and so the forces of the enemy had to remain in the Imphal sector. Some of our army commanders were of the opinion that, if the enemy's line of retreat had been left open from one side, the British would have evacuated their forces from Imphal as they had done on various other occasions in Malaya and Burma, but the Jap strategy cost us very dear.

We had finished our rations and the soldiers were asked to fight on empty stomachs or to feed themselves on jungle leaves. The hungry soldiers often begged to be allowed to carry out an attack on the enemy pickets so that they might bring back some looted rations. While our men were starving and foodless, the enemy was living on K. rations (American packets) dried fruit and various types of other luxuries. While the I.N.A. soldiers smoked dry leaves as a substitute for tobacco, the enemy soldiers had packets of good cigarettes in their pockets.

Whereas the I.N.A. fired one shot as there was a limited supply of bullets, the enemy showered a fusillade. Where our soldiers were fighting bare-footed, the enemy had leather boots. When the I.N.A. wounded had to walk over a hundred miles to reach Indangyi or Kalewa Hospital to get first-aid, the enemy Dakotas could carry even mules, which had received minor injuries in the Imphal jungles, for treatment at the base hospital.

When the enemy, because of their superior manpower, could reinforce their front line units, our boys, who were much less in numbers, had only the option of capturing Imphal or of dying miserably in the death valley of Moreh. The enemy reinforcements were sent to

the front by planes and our soldiers did not even have the bullock-cart transport. The enemy wounded or sick, who were removed to the base hospital, were operated upon with the latest surgical instruments, whereas, on our side we had either old tools or usually, a complete absence of medical and surgical instruments.

The British had war supplies enough to carry out the war independently for three years in the Imphal sector. Notwithstanding all these privileges, the enemy were receiving blow after blow and were about to retreat from Imphal when at the last moment reinforcements reached them.

The rainy season had set in. Our soldiers were falling ill by hundreds, and deaths from malaria, typhus and dysentery were on the increase. As regards sickness, the Japs too were in the same plight as the I.N.A. The enemy had knowledge of our shortage of war supplies and man-power and prepared to launch a huge offensive within a short time. With numerical superiority in men and planes, a large-scale offensive was not a difficult thing for the British to organise from a peaceful, unbombarded base like India.

The I.N.A. morale was nonetheless quite unshaken. They and the Japs continued fighting with practically no supplies and were always in danger of being encircled and starved to death if they stayed on too long. The Jap commander consulted the I.N.A. leaders in Rangoon and a withdrawal was finally decided upon. In the rainy season, road transport was completely useless and the only way in which ration should be got to the front line was in planes. But the I.N.A. had no planes and the Japs would not spare any

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for the Burma front, as danger threatened them from the Pacific. The Japanese had withdrawn most of their planes from the Burma front either to their country or to Pacific battle zones.

The late General Yamashita the "Tiger of Malaya," was sent first to Leyte and, after its capture by the Americans, he made his defences near Manila—the famous Yamashita line. Most of the searchlights, heavy artillery ack-ack and pom-pom guns were also removed by the Japs from Burma and Malaya. Factories were opened in Burma to feed the I.N.A. and Jap armies.

The retreating army had no transport facilities. The tired and hungry soldiers of the I.N.A. had to withdraw under enemy air bombardment. As the enemy pilots were confident of meeting with no ground opposition, they flew low almost touching the tree-top. The planes flew day and night. Cooking and eating had become impossible. The soldiers were allowed to light fires only for a short while in the early hours of the morning and were asked to cook enough for both times and eat the same food at night. The weary soldiers haunted by planes had no rest.

The retreat from Imphal was very slow. The muddy roads, the rains and the enemy planes had slowed down the speed of the I.N.A. soldiers' march from the one-time 35-mile a day to about 10 miles. They had to cross flooded streams and at most of these streams there was no arrangement for boats; even local made bamboo boats were not available. So the soldiers had to swim across carrying their full kit. Many were swept

away by the strong currents and drowned before the eyes of their comrades.

The Japs, too, had practically no transport no food and no arrangement for their sick. River transport was available only after walking about 60 miles from the front line and there too the boats were so few that only high officers, or the sick and wounded, were allowed to cross in them.

Hundreds of our men had died in the battle zones and hundreds more died of wounds or sickness. Still, in the face of all these disasters, the I.N.A. soldiers' hearts were full of hope. The strength of the army was greatly reduced. But it still looked for another chance—another offensive. The soldiers and the commanders were depressed and sad and nervous at the idea of facing Netaji, whom they had promised a Victory parade in Delhi or death.

The slogan, "Chalo Delhi," had lost most of its warmth. The national anthem, which was once chanted on the sacred soil of India, had lost its meaning for an army which had to leave that sacred land—its own land, where it had fought the enemy and won. The enemy, according to them, was no match for the I.N.A. in courage or bravery.

The retreating soldiers were dying of hunger, cold and starvation. A few of our officers fell into British hands, two of whom, Major Maghar Singh and Major Ajmer Singh, disgusted with the enemy treatment later committed suicide in the Delhi Red Fort. In August the I. N. A. reached Mandalay and the wounded and sick were admitted to hospital at Maymyo and Mandalay.



Netan touring East Asia.

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Three hundred staff members of the Azad Hind Government, who had gone to the front with high hopes and patriotic fervour after administering the little areas which fell into I N.A. hands, found administrative work insupportable. Many of them volunteered for reconnaissance and spy work and thus many members of the Government staff and the Azad Hind Dal fell either into enemy hands or died of bullet wounds heroically serving the cause of independence.

Mr. Bhawmick, who lost a hand while reconnoitring in the enemy lines, deserves special mention. Young Sindhi merchants of the Azad Hind Dal from Manila proved, by their front line feats, that they could die bravely like any other soldier of India.

The division which had put up so valliant a fight in Imphal thus lay sick, wounded and convalescing in hospitals. Netaji paid a flying visit to Mandalay to see the soldiers in hospital. He saw every single patient and personally asked them about their complaints and difficulties. He ordered increased rations of fruit, milk and cigarettes for the wounded soldiers back from the front line. The soldiers were also provided with new kits.

Netaji in his public speeches and in communiques praised the heroic deeds of these soldiers. He was still optimistic and he promised his soldiers sure victory in the coming winter offensive. The disheartened soldiers felt pathetically encouraged at the promises of their Supreme Commander. The Bose Brigade was again raised up to its former strength and the other three brigades too were brought up to their previous strength of 3,000 soldiers each. By about October, the No. 1 Division was

fit to take the field again. The No. 2 and 3 Divisions were ordered to return from Malaya to participate in the final campaign.

In the month of June, 1944, the Anglo-Americans started an offensive on the Continent and in the Pacific Ocean islands. After capturing Leyte, the Americans launched an attack on the Philippines, after which the situation for the Japs soon deteriorated in the Pacific Ocean.

The Japanese and the I.N.A. had attacked Imphal in favourable times when the war had not reached this crucial phase and the Japanese had no threat to their country from the Pacific islands. Earlier, small skirmishes had continued over petty islands in the Pacific and the loss of one or other island to the Japs did not have any far-reaching effect. But the defeat at Leyte and the Philippines made Japan vulnerable to enemy naval and air attacks.

The Japanese, who had helped the I. N. A. in its attack on India with the main object of capturing the Ledo Road and thus paralysing the Chinese war efforts by starving them into submission, now realised that their mistake in having under-estimated the strength of the enemy had cost them and the I.N.A. thousands of lives and much material without any results. For an offensive the commanders on the Burma front had taken supplies of arms, ammunition, medicines and foodstuffs for a very short period (some say only three weeks). They had thought that, after the fall of Imphal, big stores of supplies would fall into their hands and would be enough to feed the I.N.A. and the Japs throughout the monsoon campaign in India.

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With the loss of the Philippines and the opening of the Second Front in Europe by the Anglo-American forces, the Japanese lost all interest in a drive into India. Rather than worry about capturing the Ledo Road, they now focussed their thoughts and devoted their energies to the defence of their own mother country. From an offensive war Japan had turned to the defensive. At this stage the I.N.A. and the Japs had different interests and hence, naturally, different strategy.

While the Japs wanted to defend Japan from an expected naval attack, the I.N.A. wanted to advance into India. But still Netaji was given false hopes by the Japs that, in an offensive by the I.N.A. on India, the Japanese army and air force would fully help the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Many in the I.N.A. thought that the Japs would surely abide by their word and a winter offensive would again carry them to Imphal and on to Calcutta. Possibly, the idea was to hold the British on the banks of the Chindwin and then launch the final offensive.

The Anglo-Americans were nearing Paris, which was giving rise to genuine fears in the mind of the average Indian in East Asia because, after the fall of Germany, the united might of the Anglo-Americans was sure to be thrown into the Pacific war against the Japs and the I.N.A.

The I.N.A. wanted to break through the British defences on the Indo-Burma front and reach the plains of Bengal and capture certain territories in Bengal and Assam before the collapse of the Nazi armies in Germany. The P.G.A.H. was worried about its own war

and revolution when the Japanese were, for their part, thinking of defending their country.

Seeing that the situation was unfavourable, Netaji launched an all-out campaign for total mobilisation. He left Maymyo at the end of May and toured Malaya and Thailand. Again he came back to Rangoon. Col. Chatterjee, the Government staff and units of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were ordered to stay behind, because the idea was to utilise them in the coming offensive. In a statement on August 14, 1944, Netaji gave renewed hopes for the winter offensive. He said :

" Comrades of the Azad Hind Fauj ! In the middle of March this year, advance units of the Azad Hind Fauj, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their valiant allies, the Imperial Nippon forces, crossed the Indo-Burma border and the fight for India's liberation thereupon commenced on Indian soil. The British authorities, by ruthlessly exploiting India for over a century and bringing foreign soldiers to fight their battle for them, had managed to put up a mighty force against us.

" After crossing the Indo-Burma border, our forces, inspired by the righteousness of our cause, encountered these numerically superior and better equipped, but heterogeneous and disunited forces of the enemy and defeated them in every battle.

" Our units, with their better training and discipline and unshakable determination to do or die in the path of India's freedom, soon established their superiority over the enemy, whose morale deteriorated with each defeat.

" Fighting under the most trying conditions, our

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Officers and men displayed such courage and heroism that they have earned the praise of everybody. With their blood and sacrifice, these heroes have established traditions which the future soldiers of free India shall have to uphold. All preparations had been completed and the stage had been set for the final assault on Imphal when torrential rains overtook us and to carry Imphal by assault was rendered a tactical impossibility.

“Handicapped by these elements, we were forced to postpone our offensive. After the postponement of the offensive, it was found disadvantageous for our troops to continue to hold the line that we then had. For securing a more favourable defensive position, it was considered advisable to withdraw our troops.

“In accordance with this decision, our troops have withdrawn to a more favourable defensive position. We shall now utilise the period in completing our preparations so that, with the advent of better weather, we may be in a position to resume our offensive.

“Having beaten the enemy once in several sectors of the front, our faith in our final victory and in the destruction of the Anglo-American forces of aggression has increased tenfold. As soon as all our preparations are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again. With the superior fighting qualities, dauntless courage and unshakable devotion to duty of our officers and men, victory shall surely be ours.

“May the soul of these heroes who have fallen in this campaign inspire us to still nobler deeds of heroism

and bravery in the next phase of India's war of liberation."

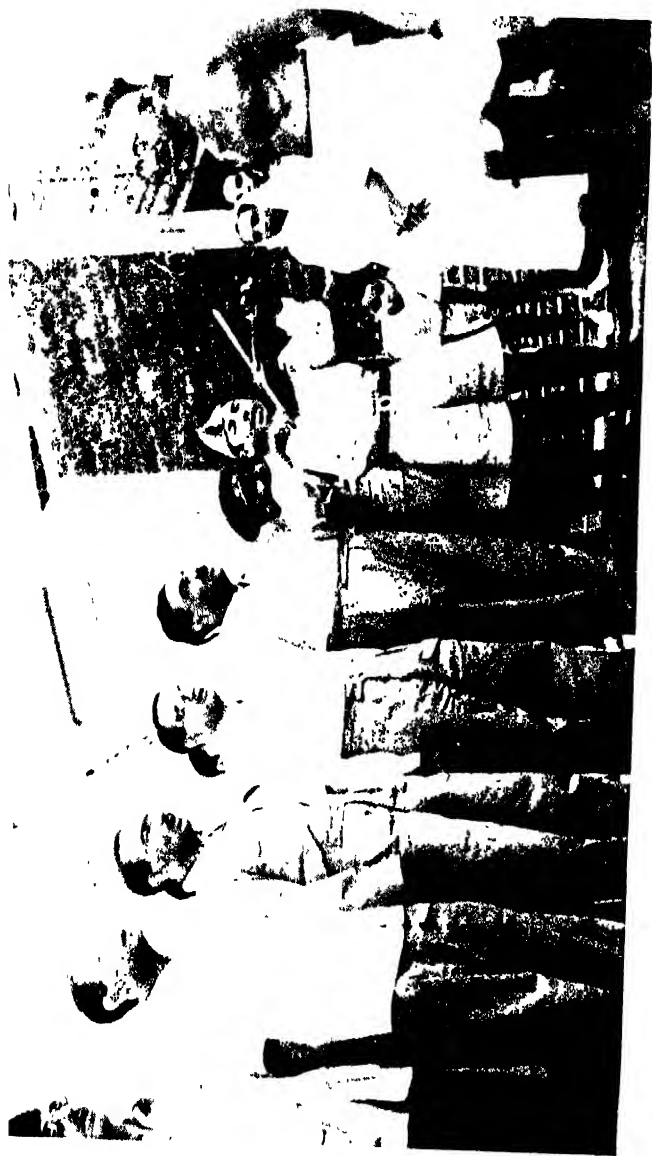
In a crowded programme during the Netaji Week celebrations in the first week of August, Subhas Bose delivered the most thrilling and important speech of the year. In these words he appealed to Gandhiji :

" Mahatmaji—After the sad demise of Shrimati Kasturba in British custody, it was natural for our countrymen to be alarmed over the state of your health. For Indians outside India differences in method are like domestic differences. Ever since you sponsored the Independence resolution at the Lahore Congress in December, 1929, all members of the Indian National Congress have had one common goal before them. For Indians outside India you are the creator of the present awakening in our country.

"The high esteem in which you are held by patriotic Indians outside India and by foreign friends of India's freedom was increased a hundredfold when you bravely sponsored the 'Quit India' resolution of August, 1942."

After maintaining that it would be a fatal mistake to distinguish between the British Government and the British people, despite a small band of idealists, and dilating at some length on the war aims of the United States and recalling his departure from India Netaji Bose proceeded :

"There remains but one question for me to answer with regard to the Axis Powers. Can it be possible that I have been deceived by them? I believe, it will be universally admitted that the cleverest and the most



Singing the National Song

cunning politicians are to be found amongst Britishers. One who has worked with and fought British politicians all his life cannot be deceived by any other politician of the world. If British politicians have failed to coax or coerce me, no other politician can succeed in doing so. And if the British Government, at whose hands I have suffered long imprisonment, persecution and physical assault, has been unable to demoralise me, no other power can hope to do so. I have never done anything which could compromise in the least either the honour or the self-respect or the interests of my country.

“Mahatmaji, you know better than anybody else how deeply suspicious the Indian people are of mere promises. I would be the last man to be influenced by Japan, if her declarations of policy had been mere promises.

“I should now like to say something about the Provisional Government that we have set up here. The Provisional Government has, as its one objective, the liberation of India.

“The only reward that we desire for our efforts, for our suffering and for our sacrifices, is the freedom of our Motherland. There are many among us who would like to retire from the political field once India is free.

“Nobody would be more happy than ourselves, if, by any chance, our countrymen at home should succeed in liberating themselves through their own efforts, or if, by any chance, the British Government accepts your ‘Quite India’ resolution and gives effect to it. We are, however, proceeding on the assumption

neither of the above is possible and that a struggle is inevitable.

"Father of our nation! In this holy war for India's liberation, we ask for your blessing and good wishes."

Netaji laid emphasis on complete sacrifice and total mobilisation. In a speech in the Rangoon Town Hall, he gave the slogan, "Karo Sab Nichhavar, Bano Sab Faqir," and with a lion's roar he demanded of the Indians: "Blood, blood and more blood." In Hindustani he said: "Tum mujhe khun do; main tumhen azadi dunga." (You give me blood; I will give you freedom).

His call for money was so well responded to, that a local merchant, Mr. Ram Das Khanna, gave all his belongings, valued at about a million dollars, and offered his own life too for the noble cause. Many more donors announced big sums. Mr. Bashir gave half a million dollars; Mr. Nizami, half a million dollars, and Mr. Madha, a million dollars. Some people came forward and offered to bear the cost of bombers and fighters.

For over two hours there was a regular bidding for Netaji's garland. The Manager of the Ziawadi Sugar Factory, Mr. Parma Nand, announced the donation of the Ziawadi Estate itself to the P. G. A. H. Mr. Habib donated his total property, comprising jewellery, houses, steam launches, cattle and lands. Mrs. Betai, a Gujrati lady, donated her whole property. Mr. Chaudhri, a Rangoon chemist, gave all his wealth and all the Chaudhri brothers offered themselves for work in the way Netaji thought best. Mr. Pitchai, a local

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Muslim merchant, gave three of his printing presses and the whole of his property.

A large portion of these donations was given in the first week of August, 1944. Most of these gentlemen, who donated their all for the nation, were personally decorated by Netaji with the medal of the Sewak-i-Hind. Seeing this spectacular enthusiasm, the Indians in Burma completely forgot about their setbacks or the results of the war in Europe and were still as willing as ever to throw in their lot without condition or stint with the Azad Hind Government and its war, which was to be fought on the frontiers of Burma—the war of India's independence.

Netaji visited the tomb of the last Indian Emperor, Bahadur Shah, to pay his humble homage to that great soul. Dr. Ba Maw and the Japanese Commander attended this function. In a speech delivered on the occasion, Netaji said :

“ Your Excellency and friends! To-day we have assembled here near the tomb of Bahadur Shah, the last Emperor of Free India. It is perhaps strange, maybe a lucky coincidence of history, that, while the remains of India's last Emperor rest on the soil of Burma, the remains of the last King of Free Burma now rest on the soil of India.

“ We in India and in Burma have all along felt bound together historically by the most profound ties. And this coincidence of history is one of the most convincing proofs of these ties between Your Excellency's nation and ours.

“ We are, both of our nations, passing through a common fight against our common foe and we, therefore,

consider it to be in the fitness of things to have a small celebration before the immortal remains of our last Emperor so that, on the one side, we might rouse the fire that burns within us and, at the same time, strengthen further the ties that have bound Burma and India so long and that will bind us together for all time.

“ We are profoundly grateful to Your Excellency and to the honourable members of the Government for the honour that has been done us by your gracious presence at this function—a function which is pregnant with important historical events in the days to come.

“ As I have done so before, once again I should like to express our unshakable determination to fight along with our Burmese friends shoulder to shoulder, assured of the magnanimous help and support of Nippon so that we may bring about the final overthrow of British Imperialism, which will, on the one side, bring India her lost liberty and, at the same time, remove once for all the menace to Burma’s safety and independence.

“ This time we express our unshakable determination before a sacred memorial, before the mortal remains of the last fighter for India’s freedom, the man who was an Emperor among men and at the same time a man among Emperors. We cherish the memory of Bahadur Shah.

“ We Indians, regardless of religious faiths, cherish the memory of Bahadur Shah not because he was the man who gave the clarion call to his countrymen to fight the enemy, but because he was the man under whose flag fought Indians from all provinces—Indians professing different religious faiths—the man under

whose sacred flag Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs, or at least freedom-loving Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, fought side by side in the war that has been desecrated and called by English historians the Sepoy Mutiny, but which we Indians call the First War of Independence.

“And now when we are engaged in the last war for India’s independence it is all the more necessary for us to renew our unshakable determination to fight this last war for independence to a victorious finish, regardless of all sufferings and sacrifices, regardless of all difficulties in our path, regardless of the length of this war, so that at long last the enemy—the common enemy of Burma and India—will be finally overthrown and we will be free not only within our homes, but free comrades marching shoulder to shoulder to fulfil the common destiny of mankind.

“Your Excellency, with us it is the practice to offer donations and contributions at shrines like this. As a token of our inner feelings and faith I can think of no better donation or *nazar* than to offer in the name of the last hero of India’s First War of Independence, Emperor Bahadur Shah, a small contribution of Rs 2,50,000 to be handed over to Your Excellency as a small token of our love and admiration for Burma and all that Burma stands for, a small donation which Your Excellency may utilise in any manner considered best by yourself.

“And now I shall close these few remarks by quoting the English meaning of a couplet which was composed by Bahadur Shah himself: ‘As long as the last particle of faith exists in the souls of India’s freedom

fighters, the sword of India shall continue to penetrate the heart of London "

Thus, Netaji continued his work of doistering up the flagging morale of his men, with a zeal that no misfortune could impair. He called a conference of the North Burma branches of the League with a view to helping the members in the organisation of those territories. The enemy was scoring easy victories from the Mytikina side where no resistance was being offered by the I.N.A. or the Japs. The workers were aware of the case of Mr. Bahadur Shah, Mytikina League President, who was arrested by the British and was taken to Delhi, where, rumour had it, he suffered tortures at the enemy's hands.

Fearing the same fate in case they too fell into enemy hands, some were reluctant to carry on the League work as vigorously as they had done in the past. Netaji himself flew to Mandalay and encouraged the workers who had assembled from all the League branches in North Burma to greater efforts. In October, Netaji returned to Singapore where he revitalised the spirit of the Indians and made a huge collection in money and material for the cause.

In October, 1944, the first year of the formation of the P.G.A N. was celebrated. At mammoth parade of I.N.A. soldiers at Mingladon, Netaji delivered a rousing address. While he was speaking, enemy planes flew over the parade ground for the first time. After the speech while he was taking the salute, the planes flew over for a second time and opened up a withering fire with their machine-guns. Netaji and the commanders immediately took cover. Only one I.N.A. soldier was killed.

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Now the enemy was fighting near Chamo in the north and Kalewa in the north-west. The Japanese had planned to give battle near Shwebo. The Jap guerilla fighters were employing delaying tactics to gain time in order to strengthen their defences in the Mandalay fortress. Fighting near Shwebo continued for over a month when the Japs withdrew to Mandalay Hill where they had already made strong fortifications inside the Mandalay fortress. The Japs put up a very brave fight against the superior forces of the enemy and bore the brunt of the ceaseless bombardment. Enemy air bombing turned the fortress into a huge graveyard.

Accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Col. Bhonsle, and Lt.-Col. Habib-ul-Rehman, Netaji flew to Tokyo to discuss important military matters with the Japanese Government. Before his departure he set up a small War Council with Col. Chatterji and Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir as Secretaries. The War Council's main business was to make plans for the successful and speedy execution of the war. In the absence of Netaji it held various meetings and discussed important matters, which it placed before Netaji on his return from Tokyo.

An order issued regarding the formation of the War Council read :

War Council :

“ Since the establishment of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind on the 21st October, 1943, a year of intensive activity has elapsed. In the meantime, the war has reached a stage when the initiative is going to pass from the hands of our enemies to those of our friends and of our Allies. To prepare for the coming

offensive, it is absolutely necessary to make an all-out effort at total mobilisation and to further intensify and co-ordinate all our activities connected with our war preparations. In order to achieve this objective, a special organ of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has to be set up. The War Council of the Provisional Government has, therefore, been formed. The War Council, which is the supreme organ of the Provisional Government for directing and controlling the war effort and the war preparations of the Government, will have the following duties :

1. " To further intensify the war activities of the Provisional Government.

2. " To initiate any new activities that will be found necessary for the war effort and for war preparations.

3. " To co-ordinate all these activities with a view to producing the maximum result, namely, to launch the offensive that will bring about the speedy and complete overthrow of our enemies.

The following is the composition of the War Council :—

1. Colonel J. K. Bhonsle.
2. Colonel M. Z. Kiani.
3. Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir.
4. Lt. Col Aziz Ahmad Khan.
5. Lt.-Col. Habib-ul-Rehman.
6. Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh.
7. Sri N. Raghavan.
8. Sri S. A. Aiyer.
9. Sri Permanand

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10. Col. A. C. Chatterji, Secretary.
11. Sri A. Yellappa, co opted member.

(Sd) D. C. NAG,
Major.

Two new Ministries of Revenue and Supply were set up, with Mr. Sircar as the Minister of Revenue and Mr. Permanand as Deputy Minister of Supply.

In Tokyo University Netaji delivered a very important speech, in which he stated India's case for independence. He spoke about a Free India maintaining its good relationship with Soviet Russia. He repeated his warning to the Japs against playing an unfair game towards the East Asiatic nations. "It will be a tragedy in Asia's history in case the Japs played false with them," he declared.

Netaji met the Japanese Emperor, Premier Tojo and other Jap Cabinet Ministers, who gave him their assurances of help in India's last fight for independence. Accompanied by Col. Bhonsle, he inspected the Indian cadets under training at the Tokyo military school.

In January, 1945, Netaji flew back to Rangoon. He immediately placed his programme of action before the members of his War Council. All preparations for the final offensive were completed and the soldiers were growing impatient to go into action. I.N.A. units started moving towards the front, which had now been shifted to Myingan at the famous Popa Hill in Central Burma, where Lt.-Col. Sehgal, Lt.-Col. Dhillon (he became Lt.-Col. about the end of February, 1945,) and Col. Shah Nawaz commanded three regiments of the No. 1 Division.

Col. Shah Nawaz commanded the Division in place of Col. Aziz Ahmad, who was sick.

Lt.-Col. P. K. Sehgal, who had been Military Secretary since May, 1942, was commanded by Netaji to lead an infantry regiment to the front. He took over the command from Lt.-Col. Rodriques at his own request. The brigade was mainly equipped with rifles, but there were some three mortars and L. M. G. S. in the battalions. The brigade left for the front in the fourth week of January. When Netaji found the enemy advance gathering speed, he spoke to his soldiers about the latest I.N.A. position in these words:

“Man is more powerful than machines. Machines will be useless in the Arakan, China and Naga Hill areas. The morale of the British soldiers has also been destroyed. If our men can enter Assam and Bengal, our countrymen will co-operate with us. Even now we have a great opportunity.

“Our army is a volunteer organisation. We have joined it not for the lure of money or reward, but for sacrifice in the cause of our motherland. If anyone amongst us be afraid of this poverty, hardship and death, he should not be sent to the front against his will.”

The I.N.A. again started moving towards the front. Mandalay had come under heavy enemy bombardment. Netaji spoke at Mingladon to the soldiers going to the front. He was present at parade and, addressing the men, he said:

“Last year the I.N.A. faced the enemy on the battlefield for the first time. The deeds of the I.N.A. were beyond expectations and had won the praises

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alike both of friend and foe. We dealt the enemy a crushing defeat wherever we fought him. Without being defeated we had as a tactical move to bring back our forces from the Imphal front due to bad weather and other handicaps.

"Now we are trying to overcome these difficulties. But everyone should remember that our army is a revolutionary army and we are not so well equipped in man-power as our enemies are. Our enemies have decided that they will fight their first battle for the defence of India in Assam and they have made this area India's Stalingrad. This year will be the decisive year of the war. The fate of India's freedom will be decided near the hills of Imphal and on the plains of Chittagong.

"Last year some of our men joined the enemy. I do not want a single man to go over to the enemy this time when we go to the front. Therefore, if anyone thinks that he is incapable of going to the front due to weakness or cowardice, or for any other reason, he should report to his regimental commander and arrangements will be made to keep him at the base.

"I do not wish to paint a very rosy picture for you. You will have to face hunger, thirst and other hardships and even death when you go to the front because the enemy has made the utmost preparations. We too shall have to mobilise all our resources."

CHAPTER X

More Battles

Taking over the command of No. 2 Guerilla Regiment of No. 2 Division, Lt.-Col. Sehgal went to the front to take up the defence of the Popa area. There a large number of guerilla actions successfully were fought by No. 2 Regiment. It was engaged in an almost day to day warfare, but we will try to recreate a few of the more important battles and engagements. We cannot ignore the various handicaps under which the I.N.A. was fighting, nor can we ignore the year and the months of 1945 which were sealing the fate of the Axis Powers, of which the I.N.A. was an ally.

On a certain hill in the Popa area, Havildar Jiwan Singh was holding a position. The British sent him a letter to lay down his arms and surrender together with his platoon. The brave soldier sent back this reply in his simple and honest soldier's way: "No, I do not surrender."

The platoon was encircled by superior forces of the enemy, leaving no possible chance of escape from the clutches of cruel death. But the Jawans preferred death to surrender. The platoon fought to the last man and to the last bullet. One of the soldiers escaped from the place and later related the story at I.N.A. regimental headquarters.

MORE BATTLES

Still another story is told of the heroic deeds of our officers and men in the last days of April, when defeat was a certainty. Major Bagri and his Adjutant, determined to die rather than surrender to the enemy, charged the British tanks with fixed bayonets and hand grenades when the tanks were advancing towards them on the plains. The full story rivals anything the fiction writers can visualise. No. 2 Regiment was withdrawing from Popa to Taungdwinggyi in two columns. One column was under the command of Lt.-Col. Sehgal and the other under Major Bagri. On the way Bagri and his column entered a village where British tanks, armoured-cars and lorry-borne troops were conducting an attack. Major Bagri ordered a charge with fixed bayonets and killed fifty of the enemy. Two of the enemy's leading tanks and armoured-cars were destroyed and two lorries wrecked. The enemy was already in retreat when tanks and armoured car reinforcements reached it. The I.N.A. soldiers stopped the tanks by means of hand-grenades. The fight continued, in which Major Bagri and various others died gloriously fighting against superior mechanised forces. These valiant soldiers could easily have saved their lives, but they preferred death to surrender—14 of these heroes were blown to bits by enemy tank fire. Through the shining example set by this Dogra Major of the I.N.A. the Dogras will ever live and be regarded as great heroes in our national history.

The battles of Imphal, Popa Legyi, Sade Pagan and various others proved beyond any shadow of doubt the superior fighting qualities of the I.N.A. soldiery.

A fighting patrol of about 20 men was reconnoitr-

ing the area of Daungle village on 4th March, 1945, when they were informed by a Burmese of the arrival of an enemy patrol in the same area. The enemy patrol consisted of 15 British soldiers in three jeeps. On receiving the news our patrol approached the enemy and opened fire on them. The enemy were caught by surprise, but returned the fire of the I.N.A. soldiers. It could not, however, stand up against such accurate and concentrated fire and fled, leaving two dead and two jeeps behind. It was confirmed by the Burmese that all the surviving members of the enemy patrol had also been wounded before they fled. Abdullah Khan was recommended for the Vir-i-Hind (a medal for bravery).

On another occasion the enemy, mainly Indians together with a few Americans, were seen nine miles from Kyauk Padaung on the Kyauk Padaung-Taungfin road. When they saw our patrol, they raised a white flag, but when our patrol advanced they opened fire. Our patrol being weak in numbers fell back.

March 17th :—Again when the Japanese showed some reluctance in going forward from the first line into the actual fighting zone, Lt. Jaswant Singh of the I.N.A. had to beat them as an inducement for them to march on. Amir Chand met a small patrol of the enemy who opened fire on him. Amir Chand hurled a number of grenades, causing 8 to 10 casualties among the enemy. The I.N.A. losses amounted to one dead and one missing.

Magwe Taundwingyi Road Battle :—The British forces attacked Taundwingyi with five tanks and a number of carriers. When our armies started a counter-



"In Jungles and Marshes we fought them to death."

offensive the enemy retreated after very slight resistance. The enemy dead were left behind and were buried by the I.N.A. soldiers.

Kabyu Action :—A Japanese company was surrounded by the enemy and was under heavy barrage of enemy fire. The Japs suffered very heavy losses losing almost three-quarters of their company. Major Bagri went to their rescue and brought back the remainder to the I.N.A. defences at great personal risk.

Battle of Legyi :—While the 4th Guerilla Regiment (Lt.-Col. Dhillon's regiment) was occupying a position in the Tangzin and Thambinde area about 25 miles west of the Popa and Kyauk Padang area, the defence of Kyauk Padang and Popa was entirely left to No. 2 Infantry Regiment with its headquarters at Popa under the direct control of the Divisional Headquarters under General Shah Nawaz Khan. The area was so big that quite a large number of I.N.A. forces should normally have been employed in defence, but instead an I.N.A. platoon was put to hold the defences. The Legyi battle is best described by Col. Sehgal himself—

“ *1st April 1945*.—A Nippon platoon stationed on hill feature 1395 astride Seiktin-Welaung road sent the following report about the enemy movements :—

“ (i) At 11-30 a.m. 10 enemy tanks with 50 men were seen going towards Legyi from Welaung.

“ (ii) At 3 30 a.m. 18 lorries, 2 tanks, 1 armoured-car, 2 motor-cycles and 2 guns were seen moving towards Legyi from Welaung. Out of these 11 lorries were loaded with stores and 7 lorries carried approximately 80 men.

"(iii) At 4 a.m. one tank was seen moving towards Legyi.

" All the tanks in the above-mentioned enemy force were medium tanks. It was not clear whether the enemy was contemplating an attack on Legyi or whether he intended to go through Seiktin towards Kabyu.

" A fighting patrol under S. O. Abdullah Khan was sent to the Seiktin area. This patrol contacted one small enemy fighting patrol in the vicinity of Seiktin, but no enemy formation was seen in the Seiktin area. The patrol returned to the base on 2nd April, 1945.

" One Recce patrol under S. O. Ram Dutt was sent to Tada to bring back information about the enemy in that area. This patrol did not return by daybreak on 2nd April, 1945.

" There was no enemy activity during the night.

" *2nd April, 1945.*—(i) At 11.30 a.m. an enemy force, between 500 to 1,000 strong, was seen in the vicinity of the crossroad on the 25th milestone of the Welaung-Seiktin road. There were a few lorries and a few motor-cycles with this force.

" (ii) Another enemy force about 1,000 strong and some tanks were seen in the vicinity of the nullah north-east of the crossroad at the 25th milestone on the Welaung-Seiktin road. This enemy force was seen digging in.

" At 1-10 p.m. enemy planes heavily bombed and machine-gunned Legyi for about 40 minutes. The whole of the village was set on fire and some damage was done to our positions on the left of the road, but

our casualties were only slight. As soon as the air raid was over, enemy artillery opened a harassing fire on our positions. This harassing fire was continued until 9 p.m.

“(iii) At 4 p.m. three enemy tanks were seen passing Thanbin village and three lorries, one gun and 40 men were seen under the palm trees in the vicinity of Thanbin. It appeared that the enemy was carrying out a recce of that area.

“(iv) At 8 p.m. an enemy force in 5 lorries supported by tanks moved towards Seiktin and Legyi. In front of this force were some dismounted men who advanced forward pretending to be gathering something from the fields on either side of the road. When the enemy came within range, one section of machine-guns opened fire. A number of the enemy were seen falling and the remainder disappeared into the nullah. The tanks and the lorries fled towards the crossroad on the 25th milestone of the Welaung road. One of our machine-guns was fired personally by Lt. Yasin Khan the M. G. Coy. Comdr. During the day no other enemy force approached Legyi. The enemy force that had moved towards Thanbin also returned towards the crossroad.

“(v) At 11-30 p.m. S. O. Ram Dutt and his men who had gone on patrol duty to the Tada area the previous day, returned and reported that there was no enemy in the Tada area and that Seiktin was also clear of the enemy.

“(vi) It was quite apparent that the enemy during the day had been reconnoitring and feeling our positions and that a full-scale attack was imminent the next day. Therefore, one company under the command of 2/Lt.

Kanwal Singh was brought up and put into position on the right flank.

" *3rd April 1945.*—I (Lt.-Col. Sehgal) personally took over the direction of the battle.

" (i) At 11-30 a.m. an enemy force composed as under was seen moving towards Tasbaukkon and his forward elements already reached Thanbin :—

Medium tanks	...	13
Light tanks	...	30
Lorries	..	60
Guns, more than	..	10
Infantry	...	1,000

"This report was given by a Nippon O.P., which was in Legyi village area and it was confirmed by Comdr. C Company which was the left forward company. Later, a part of this force was seen to be returning towards Seiktin and a large number of troops were seen crossing the nullah north east of Seiktin. A group of officers was observed carrying out recce and issuing orders under a palm-grove on the right of the road, about 2 miles in front of our positions.

" (ii) At 12 a.m. an enemy artillery opened a harassing fire on our positions.

" (iii) At 1 p.m. an enemy force consisting as under, was seen advancing along the road towards Legyi :—

Medium tanks	...	18
Armoured-cars	...	30
Lorries	...	60

" This force halted about 1,000 yards in front of our position and deployed.

" (iv) At 1-30 p.m. a small force of the enemy went

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round our right flank and attacked our 'B' Echelon. This was a complete surprise and our men were caught cooking food or carrying ammunition, rations and water. The casualties on our side were very heavy. The enemy occupied that area and was joined by some enemy tanks, which moved round our left flank. No information of the action was received at Headquarters until 7 p.m.

"(v) At 1-45 p.m. heavy shelling on the right flank followed by an enemy attack by approximately one battalion on the position occupied by one company. *The place was gallantly defended by the company and the enemy was pushed back after suffering heavy casualties*

"(vi) At 2 p.m. approximately one platoon of the enemy opened light automatic and mortar fire on our positions from the high ground astride the road in our rear. This fire was returned and the enemy was dislocated from his positions.

"By this time enemy artillery and mortars were shelling us from the front and our right rear and left rear.

"(vii) At 4 p.m. enemy artillery opened rapid fire on the right flank and continued the fire for approximately 10 minutes. This was followed by an attack by approximately one enemy battalion on our one company. This company once again defended its position most gallantly and drove the enemy back, *who after suffering heavy casualties fled in disorder.*

"During the whole of this operation 2/Lt. Kanwal Singh the Company Comdr. and Havl. Abdul Manan one of the Pl. Comdr. stood on top of two hills and

directed the fire of their units. These two brave officers did not stir from their command posts, even when enemy small arms fire was concentrated on them. It was due mainly to the gallant action of these 2 officers that the enemy was beaten off.

“By now it was apparent that the enemy was determined to make a break-through on my right flank. Therefore, I decided to withdraw reserve C Company which was on the left of the road. Accordingly, I approached the Nippon Company Comdr. in that area and requested him to assume the responsibility of stopping an enemy penetration from that side and linking up with B Company which was covering our left flank. This plan was agreed to and I ordered C Company Commander to withdraw his company back and put one platoon astride the road south of Legvi and the remainder of the company to be in reserve, prepared to counter-attack in any direction where the enemy may penetrate.

“(viii) At 7 p.m. a report was received about the enemy attack on our B Echelon and the enemy occupation of that area

“I issued orders to withdraw one pl. from A Company and 2 sections from 2/Lt. Kanwal Singh's company. This together with one pl. of C Company under the command of Lt Ganga Singh was to immediately attack the enemy in our B Echelon area. I ordered 2/Lt. Bhopal Singh, Regtl. Intelligence Officer, to accompany Lt. Ganga Singh. Lt. Khazin Shah was in the meantime to look after A Company in the absence of Lt Ganga Singh. The attack was supported by 2/Lt. Kanwal Singh's company. Two sections of 2/Lt. Kanwal Singh's

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- Company did not arrive in time but the attack was launched by two pls. at 9 p.m. and was completely successful. The enemy after suffering heavy casualties
- fled in disorder.

“(iv) At 7-30 p m. heavy artillery fire on our right flank and rear and 2/Lt. Kanwal Singh's company was attacked for the third time and once again the attack was beaten off.

“(v) At 9 p m. an enemy force about two companies strong accompanied by tanks moved towards the left flank of B Company which was covering our left flank, but this force was pushed back after a short skirmish.

“(vi) At 9-30 p.m. a report was received that the enemy had been completely cleared from B Echelon area and that the attacking unit under Lt. Ganga Singh had occupied a position on the hills astride the road south of Legvi

“(One company of 548 unit had fought most gallantly the whole day and by now was completely exhausted. The men had lived on biscuits and one bottle of water for 24 hours and were completely overcome by thirst and fatigue and were not in a condition to stand another onslaught by the enemy.

“4th April 1945.--(1) One company with one section of M. Gs. under Major B. S. Negi arrived. They had left the road well clear off Legyi and approached our position from the east. They were heavily fired on by the enemy, but luckily suffered no casualties

“I now appreciated the situation as follows:—

“(a) Our position was completely surrounded and the enemy was overwhelmingly superior in numbers and armaments.

“(b) All the officers and men were completely exhausted and unable to face another attack by the enemy.

“Therefore, I sent for the Nippon Company Commander to consult him about our future action. He reported to me that another bn. of his regiment was moving up to occupy that position. I decided to withdraw my troops on the arrival of the Nippon bn. and I rang up 531 unit to ask the Commander 531 unit for orders, but as the Commander 531 unit was not available I decided to act on my own initiative.

“I issued orders that on arrival of the Nippon bn. the I.N.A. units in the Legyi area were to fight their way eastwards. Soon after I issued these orders, I discovered that the enemy had left the road and that the road between Legyi and Popa was clear. Therefore, I altered the original orders and issued instructions to withdraw along the road.

“I received the information that the Nippon bn. had arrived.

“Withdrawal was commenced and carried out without any casualties.”

A special order of the day on behalf of Netaji was issued by Sehgal to his soldiers fighting on the front to maintain morale, and urge them to fight on till the final victory was achieved. It reads:—

SECRET. SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY.

By

LIEUT.-COLONEL P. K. SEHGAL, OFFG. CMD.
NO. 2 DIV. A. H. F.

21. In a special message addressed to the Com-

manner of No. 2 Div. A. H. F. His Excellency Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Supreme Commander of the A. H. F., has called upon all officers and men of No. 2 Div. to make every sacrifice and to exert all their efforts to defeat the enemies of India.

Sathio ! we have the privilege of fighting in the foremost ranks of A. H. F. so it behoves every one of us to be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice to uphold the honour and glory of Free India.

Enemies of India have managed to cross over to the left bank of the Irrawadi and our valiant allies, the Nipponese, are fighting grimly to defeat and annihilate the enemy.

Owing to the heavy losses suffered by the enemy, their morale has gone very low. They are entirely depending upon their air support to carry on fighting, but whenever they have been attacked by our forces, they have always fled from the battlefield.

In the name of thousands of martyrs who have patiently suffered for the cause of Free India and in the name of the heroes of the A. H. F. who have sacrificed their lives at the altar of India's Independence, I call upon all the officers and men of No. 2 Div. Azad Hind Fauj to hunt for the enemies of India and destroy them wherever they may be found.

JAI HIND.

(Sd) P. K. SEHGAL
Lt.-Col.

Offg. Comd. No. 2 Div. A.H.F.

Dhillon on the Battlefield

Major Dhillon took over the command of the Nehru

Brigade from Major Mahbub on 13th November, 1944, when the regiment was stationed at Myngyan. Later the regiment moved from there to Nyangu. In these pages we will mention four of the major battles and a few of the lesser actions which No. 2 Guerillas fought against the enemy.

The Battle of Pagan:—On the 4th of February, 1945, Major Dhillon's regiment contacted the forces of the enemy. On the 7th February when there were only three platoons of the brigade which could be put in action and which were at that moment covering the whole I.N.A. sector in that area, this regiment had to fight against a division of the enemy. Accordingly, one platoon was ordered to cross the river on the western side. This I.N.A. platoon was cut off, but it returned after three days of gruelling fighting.

Having learnt that a strong formation of the enemy was heading towards Pakoku and Nyangu, the I.N.A. was ordered to move towards Pagan at a distance of 65 miles from its former place. The British tried to land on the eastern side of the river, but were prevented from doing so up to the 13th February, 1945. On 13th they started carpet bombing and machine-gunning and on the 13th and 14th they again tried to make a landing at midnight, but were again repulsed by our forces. At dawn they tried another landing and with the help of the Indian units they launched out in sampans (local made boats). The I.N.A. opened up a withering machine-gun fire on the enemy and very soon twenty of their boats capsized. They had started the attack with over one thousand men carried in 150 boats against 800 of the I.N.A. but after their miserable failure withdrew to

their former defences on the other side of the Irrawady River. The South Lancashire Regiment launched another determined attack on the Nyingo front. The attack was covered by heavy artillery, aeroplanes and other mobile weapons against the poorly armed No. 1 Battalion of the Nehru Brigade. Fortunately in this battle four of our medium machine-guns were available for action and inflicted a terrible toll on the South Lancashire Regiment. Some 600 of the enemy were drowned in the Irrawady River.

The enemy now turned north and eventually effected a landing in the Japanese sector. Due to the shortage of manpower the Japanese had left the sector undefended.

Battle of Sade:—This battle took place on a hill position about 1,186 feet high. The hill was occupied by the enemy and there was only one way to climb it and give battle. No. 3 Battalion under the command of Lt. Khan Mohd. was ordered to attack the hill, which was defended by over a thousand enemy soldiers. The attack was launched on the night of the 15th-16th with only 120 I.N.A. men. Before launching the offensive our Jawans raised revolutionary slogans—Inqilab Zindabad they shouted. In a short while a battle of abuses raged, each side cursing the other and asking one another to come over. While this was going on, a British officer intervened on the enemy side and ordered the British Forces, “IN KO DILLI ‘FIRE’ SE POHANCHAO. Hearing this 2nd Lt. Ram Singh could restrain himself no longer and retorted in Punjabi “TUHN TAN POHNCHANDA POHNCHAINGA MAIN TENU POHNCHADINNA AHN.” Setting the words to action

he drew the pin of a hand-grenade and hurled it at the enemy Major, who was killed on the spot. Four more of the enemy were wounded by the splinters. Now the battle began in right earnest. Our men who mainly used handgrenades caused the deaths of more than 200 of the enemy and wounded an equal number. Our casualties were six men seriously wounded and ten slightly injured. Forty of our men were injured by the stones and thorns which covered this hill. Again the attack was launched by our N. C. O. (most of our officers having been injured in the previous battle) and was directed by Major Dhillon. The battle raged for three unending hours. Two of our men were killed and ten wounded. Enemy casualties were very heavy—about 300 killed and wounded littered the slopes. Having suffered serious losses in three of the Sade battles, the enemy retreated, leaving their dead behind. The hill was occupied by us on the following morning. Their resounding victory in two of the major battles of Pagan and Sade heartened our men and gave them complete confidence in their fighting ability.

Lt.-Col. Dhillon, who had written an account of the battle in this area, describes this stage of it in the following manner.

“ The Charge of the Immortals ”

The Battle of Taungzin:—“ It was a flat stretch of land without any cover either from view or from fire, except a shallow dry pond, near which three roads of great tactical importance met. Four miles north-west of this point was a hill 1428 feet high, behind which the enemy artillery was located so as to cover the road





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junction and the area south of it, the occupation of which would affect the entire plan of operations.

“ At a key point on this line was placed a company of the Azad Hind Fauj under the command of 2-Lt. Gian Singh trained at the Officers Training School of Azad Hind Fauj.

“ The company was only 98 strong. They had no machine guns or even light machine-guns. Good old rifles were their only weapons of defence or offence apart from two mines. Their orders were to check any enemy advance at all costs

“ They remained in that position for two days, but the enemy did not advance. Then on the 16th March, 1945, starting from early morning, hostile fighting planes bombed and machine-gunned their positions, until about 11 a.m. Having got rid of all the load they had, the aeroplanes went away. Then the enemy guns from behind the hill started registering.

“ Behind the barrage of artillery fire advanced a column of motorised infantry, consisting of 13 tanks, 11 armoured-cars and 10 trucks. Half of this column made its way straight towards the pond where two forward platoons of the company were in position and explosives were being thrown out of the armoured fighting vehicles, but this did not frighten our boys. They waited in their trenches for the infantry.

“ Tanks and armoured-cars like steel monsters creating hell with their fire-power approached so close that they started charging on to our trenches so as to crush and cripple our men under their heavy weight. Two mines were thrown in their way which unluckily did not burst, but they caused the monsters to stop,

which having stopped became stationary pill-boxes oozing out most inhuman forms of killing materials.

“ There was no communication between this post and the Battalion H. Qrs. when 2/Lieut. Gian Singh appreciated that their rifle fire was no match for the enemy's mortars, machine-guns, light automatic rifles and hand-grenades and their staying in trenches meant certain death or captivity with no loss to the enemy. He ordered, ‘ Charge.’ Leading the assault he shouted slogans of ‘ Netaji ki Jai,’ ‘ Inqilab Zindabad,’ ‘ Azad Hindustan Zindabad ’ and ‘ Chalo Delhi.’ All the men responded to the slogans, which echoed above the enemy fire. This was the only support which these heroes had against the superior armament of the enemy. In the name of India and Indian Independence, they charged into the enemy trucks. The enemy immediately debussed. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued which lasted for two hours, but our heroes would not give in. Forty of them sacrificed their lives after killing more than their number of the enemy. Their unconquerable spirit harassed the enemy so much that he turned in retreat.

“ Just then 2/Lieut. Gian Singh called forward his third Platoon Commander 2/Lieut. Ram Singh and was giving out orders when a bullet struck him in the head and he fell never to give orders again. 2/Lieut. Ram Singh then collected the remnants of the company and reorganised them. 2/Lieut. Gian Singh used to tell his men that he would die with them. He fulfilled his promise and remained their comrade in life and death. This was a glorious deed, of which history will remain witness as long as there is a world.

" 2/Lieut. Gian Singh and his men lived up to the ideals of our great leader—the Netaji—and have laid down their lives fighting by their posts to build up a tradition for us to follow. In FREE India the spirit of these heroes, who know no defeat, will be worshipped for generations to come and will inspire the future sons of India to live up to such high ideals.

" Many a time our patrols were seen by the enemy patrols or *vice versa* and firing started on both sides mostly from long ranges.

"One day, *i.e.*, 20th March at about 4 p.m., an enemy patrol about fifty strong came in front of the dispositions of the I.N.A. Company. Timely warning was given by the forward listening posts and our Company Comdr. Lt. Ram Nath sent forward two platoons to encircle this enemy. Before this could be done the enemy started running back. Our men ran after him for about two miles as if chasing game during peace time. The Company and Pl. Comdrs. tried their best to collect the two platoons, but the men would not listen. Most of these men were civilian recruits from Malaya. The enemy was firing back at our men but our men would not take to the ground instead they said, 'Oe bat to sun jao.' It was after about two hours that our Commanders collected all the men. When told that they should not do like this and must make use of the ground our men said, 'Sahib, ham kia karen? Dushman to rukta hi nahin hai; bhage chala jata hai.' "

**Dhillon Receives official Congratulation from the
Supreme Commander**

SADAR DAFTAR ALA KAMAN, AZAD HIND
FAUJ

(Headquarters, Supreme Command, Indian National
Army).

RANGOON
12th March, 1945.

Major G. S. DHILLON,
Jai Hind !

I have been following the work of your Regiment and of yourself with the closest interest and I want to congratulate you on the manner in which you have stood up to face bravely the situation that is difficult. I want to express my complete confidence in you and in all those who are standing by you in the present crisis.

Whatever happens to us individually in the course of this historic struggle there is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved any longer. Whether we live and work, or whether we die fighting, we must under all circumstances have complete confidence that the cause for which we are striving is bound to triumph. It is the finger of God that is pointing the way towards India's freedom. We have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India's liberty. Our hearts are with you and with all who are with you in the present struggle, which is paving the way to our national salvation. Please convey my warmest greetings to all the

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Officers and men under you and accept the same yourself. May God bless you and crown your efforts with success.

Jai Hind !

(Sd.) SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

Dhillon replied to Netaji thus :

Beloved Netaji,

Jai Hind.

I have received your letter of 12th March, 1945. Not words, only tears could express my feelings.

I thank you with all my heart for expressing your complete confidence in me and in those who are with me. I assure you, our Netaji, on behalf of the Regiment that it does not matter what may come our way we will continue the struggle according to your ideals and wish to earn our motherland's Freedom as long as a single soldier of this regiment is alive.

As for myself, my last words to you at Rangoon, "Main ap ki ankhen kisi ke samne nichhi na hone dunga," have been ringing in my ears ever since I left you and specially so after I have come back from Nyaungu. I fully realise that in spite of reasons which may be produced I have not only failed to do what I voluntarily promised, but have been the only regimental Commander to bring humiliation to you and to the AZAD HIND FAUJ. I have no face to promise again, only my actions will do so.

Your letter has put a new spirit into us.

MY ADVENTURES WITH THE I. N. A.

All the officers and men present here and I humbly had with warmest hearts have accepted your greetings. We are confident that with God's grace and your blessings it will not be difficult to achieve success.

We all pray for your long life and health to guide us through this holy War.

Jai Hind !

Your Excellency's
obediently,
(Sd.) G. S. DHILLON.

Though the struggle had reached almost its most critical stage, the spirit of the commander comes out admirably in a letter to Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, the Divisional Commander.

No. D. 5
Dated 2nd April 1945

To

COLONEL SHAH NAWAZ KHAN.

From

LT.-COL. G. S. DHILLON.

Captain Mohammad Hussain's absence has not affected the spirit or morale of the troops at all. We are prepared to continue fighting in the front line. No need of rest unless objective is achieved. We will sacrifice our lives to maintain the honour of Azad Hind Fauj. Water or no water, rations or no rations, will not affect our fighting capacity. Captain Chander Bhan,

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Lieut. Khan Mohammad and Lieut. Kartar Singh along with my staff join me in assuring you that we will fight up to the last.

JAI HIND!

(Sd.) G. S. DHILLON,

Lt. Colonel,

Commander, 450 Unit, A. H. F.

Time 21'05 hours.

Circumstances of withdrawal

The difficulties that existed in the Imphal operations did not exist in the way of the I N A. in its battles in the year 1945. Still there were various types of natural and other handicaps from which the I N A. was suffering. There were no proper communications; there was no relief from enemy air activity, no fast-moving transport to clear the field of our casualties and to take urgent cases to hospital.

Bullock-carts had to be used for the purpose, and many patients died on the way.

Water points were at least 7 to 10 miles from the battle places.

The I N A. march being slow our troops always ran the risk of being captured by the enemy's fast advancing columns.

At the time of withdrawal Major-General Shah Nawaz, the Divisional Commander, did most of the scouting himself, and personally led the troops to different points of withdrawal. Similarly Lt.-Col Sehgal even when in the grip of high fever, led his men into the firing line. Lt.-Col. Dhillon personally directed 4 major

battles and 12 small actions. He escaped arrest twelve times and even when he was suffering with stomach disorder he refused to stay behind, saying, "As long as I am alive I will go with my soldiers even though I have to do so on a stretcher."

Four of the I.N.A. men who tried to escape to the enemy lines were caught, court-martialled and shot within a short time. (The death of these I.N.A. traitors was made a charge against our three above mentioned commanders in the first I.N.A. trial.)

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Here is a true copy of the Crime Report, stating the nature of the offence and the punishment awarded.
Crime Report.

Charge against No. 42570 Sepoy Duli Chand, No. 42440 Sepoy Hari Singh, No. 42537 Sepoy Daryao Singh, No 41961 Dharam Singh

I.A.F.D 901

Place	Date of offence	Offence	Name of witness	Punishment awarded	By whom awarded and date.
Burma	28th February 1945.	(i) I. N. A. Act Sec. 35 DESERTION. In that they W. O. A. S. deserted from the front line on 28th February 1945 at 22-30 hrs. until apprehended by a unit patrol sent for the purpose at 12-00 hrs. on 2nd March 1945. (ii) I. N. A. Act Sec. 29 (C) Directly or indirectly holding correspondence with the enemy In that they, W. O. A. S., attempted to communicate with the enemy on 28th February 1945, <i>vide</i> Exhibit (a) attached.	Documentary	Recommended for Divisional Comd.'s trial (Sd). G S. DHILLON	Sentenced to death. Under the authority of Supreme Comdr. A. H.F. Letter dated 21st February 1945, to No. 2 Inf. Regt. and No. 4 Grls Regt. P. K. Sehgal, Lt.-Col. Offg. Comd. Unit No. 501. Dated 6th March 1945

Service.—Years 3. Date One copy forwarded to No. 501 (Sd) G. S. DHILLION, Major, of last record entry.—Nil. unit on 8th March 1945 Adj't Comdr. Unit No. 420 Signature of General Character—Bad O C. Burma, dated 6th March 1945

They were all shot.

The treacherous example of Mir Jaffar was repeated by five I.N.A. officers, who shamefully betrayed our cause and deserted to the enemy lines with all their important files and papers, giving clues to our offensive plans in the Arakan sector. This is one of the few blots on the otherwise unsullied name of the I.N.A., and is recorded here with regret as a painful duty. These 5 traitors, Madan, Riaz, Dey, Sarwar and Shah went over to the enemy forces, equipped with the latest information regarding I.N.A. plan and position. On the authority of the information which they had passed on to the enemy, Allied bombers played havoc with our forces by machine-gunning and bombing I.N.A. camp positions. When this matter was reported to Netaji he felt extremely shocked and disappointed and at a full parade of the I.N.A. announced death as the punishment for treachery to those officers who had betrayed the cause or to any others who might, in future, attempt a betrayal. "Those who wanted to leave the I.N.A. could do so," Netaji said. The situation on the front was not allowed to deteriorate further by Major Jagjit Singh, who took up the command pending the Commander-in-Chief's orders. Netaji in an order of the day commanded different units of the I.N.A. to commemorate Traitors' Day where the effigies of traitors should be burnt and dramas should be staged to expose the treacherous deeds of these five ignoble sons of India. Major Rawat, Major Ram Sarup and Sardar-e-Jang Major Mehr Das were immediately sent for to take command of the sector.

Netaji's full order on this occasion is as follows :—

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SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY

To

All Officers and men of the Azad Hind Army.

Comrades :

As you all know, the positive achievements of the Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj last year on the field of battle and the victories that they scored over the enemy through their patriotism, bravery and self sacrifice were marred to some extent by the cowardice and treachery of a few officers and men. We were hoping that with the advent of the New Year all traces of cowardice and treachery would be wiped out, and that in this year's operations the Azad Hind Fauj would be able to put up an unsullied record of heroism and self-sacrifice. But that was not to be. The recent treachery of five officers of the Headquarters of the 2nd Division has come as an eye-opener to us that all is not well within our ranks and that the seeds of cowardice and treachery have yet to be wiped out. If we now succeed in exterminating cowardice and treachery once for all, this shameful and despicable incident may, through God's grace, ultimately prove to be a blessing in disguise. I am, therefore, determined to take all possible measures necessary for the purification of our Army. I am confident that in this I shall have your full and unstinted support.

In order to destroy completely the germs of cowardice and treachery, the following measures will have to be adopted :—

1. Every member of the Azad Hind Fauj, Officer, N.C.O. or Sepoy, will, in future, be entitled to arrest

any other member of the Azad Hind Fauj, no matter what his rank may be, if he behaves in a cowardly manner or to shoot him if he acts in a treacherous manner.

2. I am giving an opportunity to all members of the Azad Hind Fauj who do not feel inclined to work dutifully or fight courageously in future to leave the ranks of the Azad Hind Fauj. This offer will be open for one week from the time of its communication

3. In addition to giving an opportunity to elements to leave voluntarily the ranks of the Azad Hind Fauj, I want to carry out thorough purge of our army. During the course of this purge, all those will be removed against whom there is suspicion that they may fail us, or betray us, at the critical moment. In order to carry out this purge successfully I want your fullest co-operation and I want you, therefore, to give to me and my trusted officers all available information about any cowardly or treacherous elements that may still exist in our Army.

4. It will not be enough to carry out a thorough purge now. In future, also, vigilance will have to continue. It will, therefore, be the duty of every member of the Azad Hind Fauj in future to keep his eyes and ears open in order to detect in good time any tendency towards cowardice or treachery. In future, if any member of the Azad Hind Fauj detects any tendency towards cowardice or treachery, he should report at once, either orally or in writing either to me or to the officers who may be within reach. In other words, from now onwards and for all times, every member of the Azad Hind Fauj should regard himself as the cus-

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todian of the honour and reputation of the Azad Hind Fauj and of the Indian Nation.

5 After the purge has been carried out and unwilling elements have been given an opportunity of leaving our Army, if there is any case of cowardice or treachery, the punishment will be death.

6. In order to create within our Army a moral bulwark against cowardice and treachery in any form, strong feeling has to be created in the mind of every member of the Army that for a member of a revolutionary army there is no crime more heinous and despicable than to be a coward or a traitor. Instructions are being issued separately as to how we can create such an intense hatred against cowardice and treachery so that there will be no more cowards or traitors within our ranks.

7. After the purge has been carried out, every member of the Azad Hind Fauj will be required to renew his oath to fight on bravely and courageously until the emancipation of our dear motherland is achieved. Instructions regarding the form and manner of this oath will be issued separately.

8. Special rewards will be given to those who give information regarding cowardly and treacherous elements or who arrest or shoot at the front cowardly and treacherous elements.

(Sd.) SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE,

Burma.

Supreme Commander,

Dated 13th March, 1945.

Azad Hind Fauj.

Security.

Special Order of the Day.

To

ALL OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
AZAD HIND FAUJ.

Comrades,

In order to express our indignation, disgust and hatred, against cowardice and treachery, a special observance will be held in every camp of the Azad Hind Fauj on a day to be previously fixed for the purpose. All officers and other ranks must take part in the observance.

With regard to the details of the observance, each camp will be free to draw up its own programme with a view to making the observance a complete success. Directions in broad outlines are, however, being given herewith.

- (a) Poems or articles may be written and read, expressing hatred and disgust against cowardice and treachery.
- (b) Dramas may be improvised and acted for expressing abhorrence against cowardice and treachery.
- (c) Effigies of the traitors (Riaz, Madan, Sarwar, Dey, Mohammad Bakhsh and others) in cardboard or straw or clay or any other suitable material, either in human or in animal form, should be prepared and every member of the camp should give full vent to his disgust and hatred against the traitors.

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- (d) Lectures should be delivered praising Indian heroes of the past and lauding the brave deeds of the members of the Azad Hind Fauj in the course of the present War of Liberation.
- (e) The day's observance should end with the singing of the National Anthem and collective shouting of slogans.

Special reward will be given to the camp that can put up the best show.

(Sd.) SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE,

BURMA
13-3-1945.

Supreme Commander,
Azad Hind Fauj.

In Rangoon very heavy bombing was going on. On one occasion, planes came in squadrons of fifty and bombed the Mayowngon I.N.A. hospital area. Thousands of incendiaries and small and heavy calibre bombs were thrown. Col. Aziz was hurt and unfit to take over the command of his Division. Mr. Shirazi, President of the Mufussil League, was killed on the spot. In an area of 3 square miles practically everything was demolished and 300 of our sick soldiers were roasted alive in the flames which followed this terrific bombing. When the second wave of planes passed over the hospital area and were still circling over Kangoon town, Netaji drove by car to the affected area and was grieved beyond words at the dying shrieks of his brave soldiers. Again the wave of enemy planes returned to the same area and let loose the heaviest type of bombardment.

Fortunately Netaji was unhurt. All the wounded soldiers were admitted to the General Hospital, Rangoon—a hospital belonging to the Burma Government. To

retaliate, an Intiqam Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Karim Ghani to collect money for revenging this dastardly act of the enemy, but our schemes failed before the enemy's might.

Netaji went to the firing line to encourage his soldiers and was cut off in the Mytkilla area. When the I.N.A. forces withdrew and enemy paratroopers landed somewhere near that place, Netaji found that the whole area was completely encircled by the enemy and together with Col. Raju, he made for the jungle. Later having obtained a bullock-cart from some sympathetic villagers, Netaji disguised himself as a Burmese villager, and travelled over 40 miles, (all the time passing through enemy lines,) to finally contact his own troops. A miraculous escape again. Netaji reached Pyinmina and decided personally to lead the I.N.A. troops, but the I.N.A. Commanders on the front begged of their Supreme Commander to change his decision, as, they said, his life was meant for much more useful work. Netaji collected his soldiers in the front line area and with tears in his eyes encouraged them to fight to the last man for the cause of India. Fresh batches of cadets had finished their course from the Rangoon Officers' Training School and after being commissioned were immediately despatched to the front line to replace casualties. Earlier when Netaji went to Taunggyi on a military mission and left the place after a day's stay, his house was completely demolished by bombing soon after he had left the place. On his way back from Pyinmina his car was burnt near Pegu by enemy machine-gun fire, but taking another car he reached Rangoon after one month of front line experiences. The Burma Defence Army

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under Major-General Aung San, which was sent to the front to check the enemy's advancing offensive, proved treacherous and turned on its own allies, the Japs. (Later, Aung San justified it on the basis of his being a Communist and thus tactically fighting the Fascist power of the Japs). The Burma Defence Army made the already confused war situation still worse.

The British troops landed at Daiku near Pegu, trying completely to cut off our line of retreat. The Japs who had put up defences at Tongoo and expected a battle there were thus completely taken by surprise and were forced to give an unprepared for battle in the Pegu area. Netaji hurriedly called an emergent meeting of his Cabinet in Rangoon and decided to leave I N A. troops behind to safeguard the interests of Indians in Burma. Major-General Loganathan was put in command of the I N A. Forces in Burma and Netaji, with a few of his Cabinet members, left for Bangkok. He left Rangoon on the 24th April, accompanied by a few of his senior officers very narrowly escaping encirclement by the enemies. By the 26th the enemy had completely occupied the whole of the Pegu area, cutting off Rangoon, which was officially occupied on the 3rd May, 1945.

The last message of Netaji was issued before he left Burma for Bangkok. The message reads :—

“ I am leaving Burma—the scene of many heroic battles that you have fought since February, 1944, and are still fighting. In Imphal and Burma, we have lost the first round in our fight for independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances. Your brave deeds in

battles against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of the Arakan and the oilfield and other localities in Burma will live in the history of our struggle for Independence for all time.

“Comrades ! At this critical hour, I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down as heroes; go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generation of Indians who will be born not as slaves, but as free men because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forefathers, who fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam and Burma, paved the way to ultimate success and glory. My unshakable faith in India’s liberation remains unaltered. I am leaving in your safe custody our national Tricolour, our national honour and the best traditions of Indian warriors. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the vanguard of India’s army of liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to uphold India’s national honour so that your comrades, who will continue the fight elsewhere, may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all times.

“If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the advice of my Ministers and high-ranking officers I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for Indian emancipation. Knowing my countrymen in East Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they can continue the fight under all circumstances and all your sufferings and sacrifices will not be in vain. So far as I am con-

cerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge which I took on the 21st October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of 38 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself, that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free and before very long. May God bless you ! ”

In another message he said,

“ To my Indian and Burmese friends in Burma—

“ Brothers and sisters ! I am leaving Burma with a very heavy heart. We have lost the first round in our fight for independence. But we have lost only the first round. There are many more rounds to fight. In spite of our losing the first round, I see no reason for losing heart.

“ You, my countrymen in Burma, have done your duty to your Motherland in a way that evoked the admiration of the world. You have given liberally of your men, money and materials. You have set the example for total mobilisation. But the odds against us were overwhelming and we have temporarily lost the battle of Burma.

“ The spirit of selflessness that you have shown, particularly since I shifted my headquarters to Burma, is something that I shall never forget so long as I live. I have the fullest confidence that that spirit can never be crushed. For the sake of India’s freedom, I beseech you to hold your heads erect and wait for that Blessed Day when once again you will have an opportunity of waging war for India’s Independence.

“ When the history of India's Last War of Independence comes to be written, Indians in Burma will have an honoured place in that history.

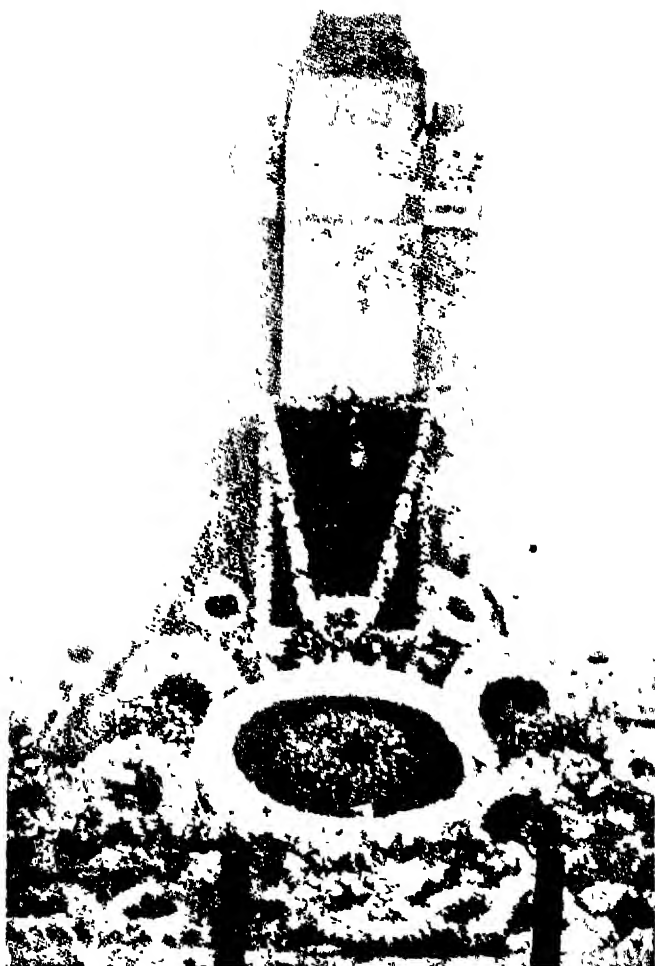
“ I do not leave Burma of my free will. I would have preferred to stay on here and share with you the sorrows of temporary defeat. But on the pressing advice of my Ministers and high-ranking officers I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for India's liberation. Being a born optimist, my unshakable faith in India's early emancipation remains unimpaired and I appeal to you to cherish the same optimism.

“ I have always said that the darkest hour precedes the dawn. You are now passing through the darkest hour, therefore the dawn is not far off.

“ I cannot conclude this message without publicly acknowledging once again my heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of Burma for all the help that I have received at their hands in carrying on this struggle. The day will come when Free India will repay that debt of gratitude in a generous manner.”

The I.N.A. troops at Pynmina, Zyawaddi, and Pegu and the troops coming from Prome found themselves completely encircled by the enemy forces, but still a few companies of the I.N.A. escaped to Moulmein through Pegu Yoma and the hilly ranges in the Pegu District. Rangoon fell on the 3rd of May. In the interval between the 26th of April and the 3rd of May, the I.N.A. took charge of the town of Rangoon and saved both the Indians and the Burmans from the worst type of disaster which they had faced in 1942 at the time of the British retreat from Burma. The Indians of

.IN UNDYING MEMORY



The I.N A. Canatoph blown up by the
British in Singapore.

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Rangoon even today are not forgetful of the help the I.N.A. gave them in the darkest days of Rangoon. General Loganathan surrendered the I.N.A. troops to the British as prisoners of war on behalf of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Netaji, who had already left for Bangkok, continued the war against the Anglo Americans.

CHAPTER XI

Arrest and Detention

We had had our orders from Netaji before he left us for Malaya. We were to remain at our stations in Burma and to keep faith with the Cause, to prepare for the worst unflinching. It was not an easy order to carry out. The I.N.A. soldier who had vowed to fight on to the last drop of blood would find it extremely difficult to surrender his rifle to the enemy. Too much depended on the soldier's discipline. A sort of hushed expectancy descended like an ominous blanket over the vast city of Rangoon—and Rangoon had been declared an open town by the Japanese before their complete withdrawal. The town was absolutely undefended.

It had been reported that the Allied navy was massed outside the mouth of the Rangoon River, ready to blow up the town if there was the slightest show of resistance on the part of the I.N.A. against the fast advancing Allied land forces. The suspense of waiting was eating at the hearts of our soldiers. Rangoon was like a powder magazine and we, of the I.N.A., knew that the population was looking askance at us. The last Japanese soldier had withdrawn. Nippon was retreating towards Moulmein.

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Before long Major-General Loganathan had received a message from the Allied Commander, giving warning that Rangoon town would be completely blasted unless the population hoisted white flags on all buildings as an indication of surrender. The time had come and the sigh of relief from inactivity was almost audible. The good citizens of Rangoon must be preserved and saved from the horrors of heavy bombardment. Major-General Loganathan immediately ordered all National tricolours to be struck and white flags to be hoisted. It was a heavy task charged with deep emotion to watch the decadent white flag of surrender slowly lift itself to the top of the flagstaffs which until recently had held high the proud National tricolour. Rangoon, which for three years had enjoyed liberty and had been for us Indians, at least, the symbol of freedom, now presented the dreadful aspect of a town in the throes of defeat. The citizens went about sad-eyed and heavy hearted, afraid for the future of the Indian freedom-fighters. Fear replaced suspense—fear of the unknown; that animal fear of the strange and the unaccustomed, seized on the imagination of the people. Nobody could even guess at the immediate policy which the Allied Commanders would impose on the town. In the market-places, dealers were already refusing to accept Japanese currency in return for their wares and, because the people were not able to make their purchases, panic took hold of them and burst out in the form of murder and loot. Uncertainty and suspicion lurked like evil reptiles in the heart of Rangoon.

The week preceding the occupation of Rangoon by the enemy was a week of unpredicable happenings.

The Azad Hind Government, however, exercised a remarkable control over the war-weary people. When it appeared as though serious food riots would break out, the I.N.A. threw open all stores and banks, allowing the people to carry away foodstuffs and other material which they would not like should fall into enemy hands. The Azad Hind Bank alone continued to function unmolested. Order was maintained in spite of the sullenness which fear and suspense had instilled into the people.

At about 9 a.m., on May 3rd, 1945, a large number of enemy paratroops floated down out of a brilliant sky to land on the grounds of the old Arsenal and, by the evening, Allied armour was heard rattling up the streets. Rangoon had fallen, and British military control replaced the Azad Hind Government.

The picture was not very inspiring. Beginning with the murder of many men of the Azad Hind Sangh and the mass arrest of Indian and Burman patriots, chaos reigned supreme when an occupation order completely deflated the value of Japanese currency, which was the only money the poor people possessed. Practically nobody in Rangoon could produce any British Indian currency, except the occupying troops themselves. Hunger lurked at every street corner.

Brawls, murder and chaos hung dangerously over the charged atmosphere of Rangoon. Orders, however strictly they might be imposed, were never any substitute for food to an empty stomach. The populace screamed into the ears of the Rangoon shopkeepers for food and shook sheafs of Japanese notes under their

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noses. When threats failed, the hungry masses reached out desperate fingers at the throats of their tormentors. Rangoon writhed under the dreadful heel of economic death. Dread, fear and hate of another kind swept the citizens off their feet and erupted in murder and loot.

The Azad Hind Bank was, however, allowed to function and this somehow lulled the people into a strange belief that the British would grant a general amnesty to the I.N.A. personnel. I.N.A. officers and men were taken into custody and jailed in different parts of Burma. No time was lost by the British in closely interrogating soldiers of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Hope for the future of the freedom-fighters died quickly and the Indian people in Burma gleaned a pittance of satisfaction from the knowledge that their beloved Netaji was safe in Bangkok and that his unequalled oratory swept in optimistic diapason over the Bangkok Radio, there continuing this unequal war.

In all this confusion it is not unnatural that we were not able to keep in mind the fate of the many thousands of our soldiers, who were still fighting in the Pynmina and Prome sectors. Personally, I was arrested by the British military police, who traced me to the house of a dear friend and took me while I was at lunch. The Burman police were very sympathetic towards me at the lock-up and my many friends sent me encouraging assurances that they were prepared to stand by me in the event of my being tried at Rangoon. An inspector of police who came to see me told me that I could keep two spare suits of clothes if I needed them,

which made me ask if he had any knowledge of my removal to some other place. He did not know, of course, but his kindness touched me and I made a mental note of his advice. The lock-up which accommodated me had no arrangements for food which I was allowed to obtain from Mrs. Chandran, who invariably went to the trouble of bringing my meals to me. I, therefore, asked the good lady to bring along the required clothing on her next visit and subsequent events proved that it was just as well she did

Early the next morning, two Police Inspectors called for me and a peculiar happiness overcame me as I stepped out of the small lock-up. I was told to bring all my belongings with me and I immediately sensed that I was to be taken to another place, though where I could not guess. Somehow the mystery surrounding my destination filled me with a sense of elevation and my steps were brisk as I walked to the truck which drove me to the town lock-up. There I met Mr. Tilak and, later, we were escorted before an Australian Major. Our joy knew no bounds when the Major told our escort that, since there was no plane available on that day, we would have to leave for Calcutta the next morning at eight.

Calcutta was familiar, with a difference. The Motherland responded to our emotions sadly ; her sons were shakled and she herself was in bondage. So different was this visit from that last one I had paid Calcutta in 1942, when hopes were high and ambition fought for first place in my thoughts with that revolutionary zeal which had driven me across the Indian borders into the fight for freedom, which, today, we were inclined to

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think, was lost. Fate had been unkind ; the aggressors had proved themselves too strong for those aspirations and that zealotry which we had pitted against them in battle. Our dreams of a free India fell to the ground in a thousand depressing shreds. Around us we could see the horrible scars of the terrible Bengal famine and the soul-freezing tales of the harrowing experiences of our people in Bengal was wafted into the police lock-up into which we were thrown.

One hope we could still cherish, and that was the possibility of, once again, seeing our dear ones—our kith and kin. Some small consolation filled our hearts to know that the water we were drinking was drawn from our own great rivers; that the air we breathed was Indian; that the bread we ate had been made from wheat sown and gathered by some strong sons of the Indian soil. These things consoled and sustained us and we believed that, if there was a trial, we might still enjoy the privilege of carrying our message—the wonderful message of our beloved Netaji—to the eager Indian people or, alternatively, if we were to be shot, that our blood would flow into the warm Indian soil which had already kissed the blood of Bhagat Singh and Jatin Dass. Yes, India was welcome for Life and for Death.

Two intelligence officers in Bengalee clothes and two policemen later took us over from the Australian Major and Mr. Tilak was placed in a different car to that which was to carry me away. A mile down the road, these two cars separated and shot off in different directions. I found myself, eventually, locked up in a small room on the Lord Sinha Road, Security Office.

I was tired and terribly depressed and, lighting a cigarette, I sat down wearily to brood over the quick moving past and to try and get a glimpse into the awesome, dark future which stretched out before me. What next? I thought. Would they torture me? Suppose they tortured Tilak? But he was a strong man; he would stand up to any devilish thing the police could contrive. I felt sure that I would be hammered into any sort of right or wrong confessions. The cigarette had burned half-way down when a shout, "Throw away that cigarette!" roused me from my reverie. I had not thought the Indian police could act as quickly as this. An Anglo-Indian police officer strode arrogantly into the room without any formality.

To him I was of the rabble; a culprit, a revolutionary who had crossed the border for political reasons. I was a political prisoner and had participated in the 1942 movement; I had joined the I.N.A. and what is more! I had admitted all this myself. It was enough for him. "No consideration," was written large across his face:

"Might as well throw away that cigarette, Mr. Krishan," he said.

I looked up at him, slowly, sadly, searching his eyes for some recognition of our Indian brotherhood. I was not angry—how could I be? How could this fellow Indian understand me? The cigarette dangled limply between my fingers. He turned his eyes away nervously and seemed to read my thoughts.

"That's probably the last cigarette you will smoke!" he added.

"I'll get a couple of years in jail, I suppose," I enquired.

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"You have a hope," he laughed awkwardly. "Death more probably."

He continued to talk to me for some time, mainly asking me questions of a futile, childish nature. What was the longest distance I had ever walked. What kind of food I had eaten in Burma and where it had come from. Were the Japanese barbarous? He seemed childishly happy at my replies and what he called "admissions." After an hour he left my cell and I felt relieved. If that was all the police had to ask of me, they might have saved themselves the trouble. I had already stated at Rangoon the route I had taken when I left India and my political convictions which prompted my joining the I N.A.

A little later he returned with two other policemen. This time his reason was merely to get a snapshot of me, perhaps for his private collection. I had no other visitors that evening. About sunset I was escorted by two C.I.D. Inspectors and three constables to Howrah Station where we entrained for Delhi. At Delhi, a military truck drove us to the stately Moghal Fort.

"Chalo Delhi!" Netaji's cry, rang in my ears as the truck rolled into the ancient Red Fort. This was to be my prison. "Chalo Delhi!" Well I was here now!

The military police took me over and I was locked in a cell. A number of voices reached me and I realised that other prisoners were in the adjoining cells. I could not distinguish any of those voices, but I sensed that they were brother I N.A. men. Thick walls separated them from me, but the sense of comradeship melted

those walls and filled me with a deep feeling of nearness. I was tired and fell almost at once into a deep dreamless-slumber.

I learned later that my companions were all senior officers. Ehsan Qadir, Shah Nawaz, Jehangir, Sehgal, Mehboob, Rashid and many others were confined there, either in solitary cells or in couples. For two months we were interrogated and browbeaten. Sometimes a month would pass between one period of interrogation and another.

Is there any need for me to dwell at any length on these perpetual questionings? Our people in India had taken up the pen when we had laid down the sword. Britain recognised the stronger weapon and very soon realised that it could not wreak any vengeance on the freedom fighters of the I N.A. Pandit Nehru, that other redoubtable fighter for freedom, took over where Netaji had not been able to continue. The considerable weight of public opinion had been too much for Britain—Britain, who's policy always wavered whenever the world frowned. The wonderful thing which even Britain could not face was that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was able, in a few short years, to bring about an unassailable brotherhood among all the peoples of India—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Pathans, Madrasees, Bengalees, Maharattas; Peasants, Artisans, Clerks and men-about-town. Stracey had shown us that the heart of Anglo-India was also in the Indian soil and I felt a strange pity for the Calcutta police officer who had first questioned me on Indian soil. There is no need for me to labour the point. India was



Bapu Addressing the I N A Officers

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ours. We had come to Delhi as our Netaji had told us to and, strangely, we were not defeated.

Nine months after my arrest, every community in India demanding our release, the British Lion bowed in defeat and the I.N.A. people were given their freedom. I too was released.

